

CARL

# Sandburg

POET and PATRIOT



GLADYS ZEHNPFENNIG

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY





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# **CARL SANDBURG, POET AND PATRIOT**

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# Carl Sandburg, Poet and Patriot

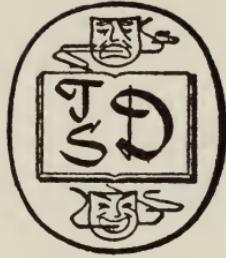
By GLADYS ZEHNPFENNIG



Publishers

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, INC.

Minneapolis, Minnesota



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*Printed in the U. S. A.*

*By THE BRINGS PRESS*



First Printing—May, 1963

Second Printing—October, 1963

Third Printing—May, 1964

*International Copyright Secured*

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 63-14389

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There is only one horse on the earth  
and his name is All Horses.

There is only one bird in the air  
and his name is All Wings.

There is only one fish in the sea  
and his name is All Fins.

There is only one man in the world  
and his name is All Men.

There is only one woman in the world  
and her name is All Women.

There is only one child in the world  
and the child's name is All Children.

There is only one Mother in the world  
and His children cover the earth  
and they are named All God's Children.

Carl Sandburg

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To all  
the librarians and teachers  
who inspire a deep love for reading  
and to all  
the young searchers for knowledge  
who realize that you can go anywhere,  
do anything, and be anyone you want to be—  
in the wonderful world of books.

# Contents

Foreword .....	9
Acknowledgments and Remembrances .....	11
Chapter I	
Melting-Pot Baby .....	17
Chapter II	
The Mama .....	25
Chapter III	
The Papa .....	32
Chapter IV	
Book Fever .....	40
Chapter V	
Little Man, You've Had a Busy Day! .....	54
Chapter VI	
Groping and Seeking .....	64
Chapter VII	
Puerto Rico, Here We Come! .....	77
Chapter VIII	
"The Terrible Swede" .....	86
Chapter IX	
A Feeling of Momentum .....	95
Chapter X	
The Pattern Comes Clear .....	108
Chapter XI	
Assignment: The People .....	118

## Contents Cont.

Chapter XII	
Flummywisters and ‘Flickers’ .....	129
Chapter XIII	
The Background of a “Social Aggravator” ....	136
Chapter XIV	
Carl Sandburg’s Mr. Lincoln .....	147
Chapter XV	
A Patriot Writes .....	157
Chapter XVI	
Poet of the People .....	172
Chapter XVII	
War on Paper .....	186
Chapter XVIII	
Remembrance Rock .....	196
Chapter XIX	
Mr. Lincoln’s Message .....	210
Chapter XX	
To Dwell in Many Places .....	227
Chapter XXI	
Mr. Lincoln’s Carl Sandburg .....	242
Credits .....	265

## Foreword

Searching for a title for the biography of Carl Sandburg is a frustrating pre-occupation that usually comes to a dead end with something desperate like "Mr. Everything"! Poet of the People, Lincoln biographer and authority, novelist, collector and singer of the songs of The People, dream-weaver of delightful American fables, reporter, commentator, TV and radio personality—the list is overwhelming.

Clearly discernible, a robust theme runs through all his works. Carl Sandburg loves his country, and he is devoted to the welfare of The Family of Man.

Patriot Carl Sandburg is a lamp-lighter along the high-roads and back-lanes of American history. He passes the torch to his readers who feel the glow of patriotism stimulating them to new appreciation of freedoms dearly bought. Carl Sandburg is a patriot who reminds us that "the dead hold in their clenched hands that which became the heritage of us, the living." He begs for vigilance with a somber warning: "... when a society or a civilization perishes, one condition may always be found. **THEY FORGOT WHERE THEY CAME FROM.**"

During the greatest part of his eighty-five years, Carl Sandburg has waged a vigorous campaign to show Americans where they came from—the better to judge where they are going. It might be said that a patriot is a citizen who gives the ultimate gift to his country, with perceptive awareness of his dedicated

purpose. Bountifully and abundantly has Carl Sandburg given.

Eighty-five years old on January 6, 1963, Carl Sandburg can look back on a lifetime in which the customs, viewpoints and working patterns of a mighty nation's people have been altered beyond the dreams of his Swedish immigrant parents. With his fingers on the pulse of his beloved country, he has helped to shape its destiny with words both gentle and barbed, both booming and hushed, and always with immeasurable understanding for the people. The People, Yes.

## Acknowledgments and Remembrances

To be honored with the opportunity to write about the fabulous Carl Sandburg, and to be privileged to visit with him in the process, is an author's realization of the American Dream. My first expressions of gratitude and deep affection are for you, Carl Sandburg. Thank you for taking time from your busy writing schedule to let me talk to you at Connemara Farm, while this biography was in the process of creative development. Thank you for being all the remarkable things you are, at the splendid age of eighty-five. Thank you for setting us an example of patriotism that is beyond selfish measuring—for sharing your idealistic American Dream with us—and for reminding us to build strong arches of love and understanding that the Family of Man shall survive. May we keep reading you and heeding you!

Without access to the Rare Book Division in the Library of Congress, this biography could not have been written in such graphic detail. My appreciation is best expressed by the references which I have made to my visits there. As I have noted, Carl Sandburg "dwells" in many sections of the Library of Congress, and I did not lack for librarians to point me in the right direction! I am grateful to the Newspaper Division in the Annex, and for all the Library of Congress research assistance that helped me to fill out the picture of a great life lived in the Great American Tradition.

Once more I salute my home town "font of knowledge," the Handley Library at Winchester, Virginia, which boasts four complete sets of Carl Sandburg's

epical Lincoln biography and a goodly collection of other Sandburg works. The girls at the Handley Library have pretty legs from running upstairs to the periodical room so often to track down research material! Thank you, my dears.

I am deeply indebted to Carl Sandburg's publishers, Harcourt, Brace and World, and their predecessors, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, for the wealth of Sandburg quotations in this book. Each was needed to prove a point. They are a minute part of the whole Sandburg creative picture, and I hope they will arouse every reader of this book to a keen desire to read, read, read Sandburg!

To my fellow-member of The National League of American Pen Women, Gail Bakken, my most sincere appreciation for the fine material about Carl Sandburg's memorable visit to Minnesota.

It has been necessary to consult many authoritative sources. Harry Golden, Carl Sandburg's cherished friend and biographer, heads the list. Additional research sources include Rica Brenner's "Ten American Poets," Evald Benjamin Lawson's "That Man Knows Lincoln," M. D. Rosenberg's Sandburg feature story in "The Washington Post," Fanny Butcher's columns in "The Chicago Sunday Tribune," and "The Chicago Daily News" for 1925.

Background information and atmosphere were obtained from miscellaneous books and publications, including Thomas Wolfe's "Look Homeward, Angel"; "The Saturday Review"; Macgruder's "American Government"; "Our Country" by West and West; "Universal Standard Encyclopedia" and "Encyclopedia Britannica."

Thanks for further assistance great and small to: Mrs. Carl Sandburg in memory of a special telephone visit; to Florence Kirkland, Donald Singerman, Marilyn Silberman, and all the other gentlefolk who helped me blaze a trail from Galesburg to Flat Rock.

Special credit is given to Editta Sherman for the use of her photograph of Carl Sandburg.

When Carl Sandburg autographed my copy of the Abraham Lincoln "distillation," he wrote: "Salud! to G. Z. says Carl Sandburg." Now I will answer, "Salud! to Carl Sandburg says G. Z." Thank you for crowning us with "a shovel of stars for keeps" to remember you by.

—Gladys Zehnpfennig



IN APPRECIATION  
to  
THE CARL SANDBURG BIRTHPLACE

Here in these United States, log cabins and modest cottages can cradle thinkers of great thoughts whose philosophies may stimulate the minds of their fellow-men for countless generations.

The Carl Sandburg Birthplace has been an appealing source of inspiration in the writing of this book. Again and again, the pattern has led back to 331 East Third Street in Galesburg, Illinois, where a boy child named Carl was born to Swedish immigrants August and Clara Sandburg on January 6, 1878.

Part of the income derived from the sale of copies of **CARL SANDBURG: POET AND PATRIOT** will be contributed to the support of Carl Sandburg Birthplace, Incorporated. As an additional salute to the poet and Lincoln biographer whose first home is appropriately honored in his own lifetime, the publishers will furnish the Birthplace with a number of copies of the biography for presentation to large high school visiting groups to be deposited in their school libraries.



## Melting-Pot Baby

Four score and five years ago, a child was born in a humble cottage in the railroad town of Galesburg, Illinois, in the United States of America.

On that cold day of January 6, 1878, the midwife hustled around the bedroom too busy to think of the omens and portents and possible strange presences in the tiny three-room house.

Considering what the future would bring, an active imagination might have conjured up the shadow of a tall man standing somberly in some dim corner—a man with a black beard circling his chin, a high hat set straight on his forehead, and a knitted shawl around his shoulders against the winter chill and the many storms that had buffeted him in years that were gone.

Clara Sandburg had an active imagination, but she would be thinking devoutly in terms of the Spirit of God hovering over her at this moment of birth, for she was a woman of deep faith.

August Sandburg, after heating water on the kitchen stove and being as helpful as he could, would wait tensely, clasping his big hands tightly together

and trying to think of something bright to say to his small daughter Mary, his toddling little firstborn. A man who was slow with words ordinarily—what could he say at such a moment?

Perhaps the newborn infant's first indignant cry was drowned out by a locomotive whistle from the nearby Chicago, Burlington and Quincy tracks. Surely no train slowed down to salute the birth of August Sandburg's son, but the Swedish immigrant father took joy in echoing the midwife's words, "Det ar en pojke!" In the language that came easiest for him, August Sandburg would be saying that this was a boy!

It was a joyful day for the small Sandburg family! But no passengers got off the train, eighty-five years ago, to pay their respects to the very young son of Clara and August Sandburg, immigrants from Sweden.

There is a difference now, and it is almost beyond the comprehension of the man who wrote, "Nothing happens except first a dream . . ." He shakes his head, astonished that any living person should be so honored. The eyes under the green visor warm with good humor. "They tell me that some people get off the train to see that house—just to see that house—and then they wait for the next train to take them on their way again." You could talk to millions of people about it, and nobody would be surprised. Only Carl Sandburg is surprised.

The Sandburg family did not live in the house at 331 East Third Street for very long, but it still stands as living proof that good things come in small packages. "Nothing happens except first a dream," and a lady's dream came true in 1945. Mrs. Adda George,

the widow of a Northwestern University professor, went house-hunting down near the railroad tracks in Galesburg. Mrs. George, a teacher and a lover of fine literature, felt herself drawn to the dilapidated three-room house that had been lacking in grandeur even when its walls were new in the 1870's.

From this small residence, August Sandburg had strode off early in the morning to labor his ten hours a day at the anvil in the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad yards. In this cottage, Clara Sandburg, with a mid-wife in attendance, gave birth to Mary, Carl and Mart.

Mrs. George had taken Mary with her, in 1945, to make certain they found the right house. In an initial gesture of enthusiasm, Mrs. George marked the house with a boulder and a plaque. She had reckoned without the sprightly Italian lady who now owned the house and refused to be properly awed by the fact that it was the birthplace of a famous and beloved American.

The Italian lady's determination equaled Mrs. George's, in the opposite direction. In a lively account of the finding and renovation of the precious property, Mrs. George said that the owner sometimes hid the plaque and often tried to roll away the boulder. This is the sort of rugged individualism that is calculated to make Carl Sandburg chuckle and say, "The people, yes."

It is fortunate that Carl Sandburg's first home has survived, to be purchased and made whole again, to be filled with all the mementos of his family and his amazingly productive writing years. Later there would be

a "room of his own" for that wistful stranger in the tall hat, with the knitted shawl around his shoulders. Carl Sandburg has brought him out of the dim shadows of the past where his image was often blurred and distorted by the mixed emotions of Americans who were either with him or against him, or somewhere betwixt and between.

When the Italian lady died, her son offered the house at 331 East Third for sale. Mrs. George quickly sent out a rallying call, and a Carl Sandburg Association was formed. Under the project title, "Sandburg Birthplace Incorporated," a drive for funds was started. Within sixty days of the option, enough money was raised to buy the house.

There were not enough funds for extensive repairs, but Mrs. George set to work on the restoration of the house, sometimes advancing money when contributions could not cover expenses.

As more people were alerted to participate, money came into the fund from all over the country. Sometimes the contributions were large, sometimes small.

School children were generous with their pennies and nickels. Hadn't some of them spent hours of delight in "Rootabaga County"? Hadn't they learned about the young life of another famous Illinoisan in "Abe Lincoln Grows Up"? Surely all of them had read "Fog" in their literature books and juggled it around in their minds! Carl Sandburg was close to them, in the same way that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Eugene Field were close to the young people of their era.

While the early repair work on the house was in progress, young people from Douglas School, which Carl Sandburg had attended, worked in the yard. The property boasts an authentic wooden pump. There is a fence of split hickory pickets, and there are old-fashioned plants in the yard. A small building in the back yard is a traditional reminder of pre-plumbing days.

After the house was made snug with new lath, plaster and siding to keep the treasures safe, an inventory of existing Sandburg furniture was made and some of the belongings were restored. Among them were the family Bible, some wooden Bishop Hill chairs, a wash-stand, wall brackets, dishes and kitchen utensils. Pioneers have donated furnishings for the house, including a rope bed and trundle bed with "handwoven coverlets." Hanging on the walls are old Swedish pictures of the Sandburg parents, as well as pictures of succeeding generations, some by the illustrious artist-photographer, Edward Steichen.

In "The Galesburg Birthplace of Carl Sandburg," Mrs. George describes what now goes on in the room where Carl Sandburg was born. "In the tiny bedroom are a fine radio-phonograph and Sandburg records of songs from 'The American Songbag' and readings from 'The People, Yes.' The little room which heard his first cry now echoes to his great tones."

August and Clara Sandburg would be surprised if they could see that house now. Their son, Carl August, was born of the people—the people who toiled long hours for a few pennies, who prided themselves on

their industry and thanked God for the blessings of useful lives.

Carl Sandburg was born on a cornhusk mattress and it was many years before he made contact with a feather bed. "How did it feel to sleep on cornhusks, Mr. Sandburg?" There was a note of wry humor in his voice. "I'll let you imagine that." He can be a master of mischievous evasion, straight out of Rootabaga County. And you dutifully try to imagine how it feels to sleep on a cornhusk mattress.

Carl's immigrant father had built the family cradle, which each of the babies inherited in turn. Old family pictures remind us that it was difficult to tell a little boy from a little girl back in the 1800's and early 1900's. Carl was still "in dresses" when the family of five moved to another small house in Galesburg. Carl barely remembers helping his father harvest carrots and potatoes by brushing off the dirt and putting them in baskets.

As though it had learned its limits for a three-room house, the Sandburg family did not grow during this period. Except for the horse. Here they kept a horse and two-seater wagon. Small Mary, Carl and Mart were introduced to the "rolling prairies" on trips to visit with relatives who had come over from the "hemlandet," the homeland, as August and Clara Sandburg had done. There was lively talk about spending ten weeks in the steerage on a sailing ship, with a sack of black bread, cheese and baloney for nourishment.

Carl learned to admire and appreciate the Swedish Lutheran immigrants with whom his parents had "steerage ties," those forthright new Americans who

were "strong for work," who appreciated the opportunities of their adopted country, who kept recalling that they could only have white bread on holidays in the Old Homeland and here in America they could buy white flour any time. The women were good housekeepers; the fathers registered themselves as citizens and solid Galesburg Republicans.

On visits to the country, Carl enjoyed absorbing all the sights and sounds of a farmyard, but the rolling prairies gave him a special joy. "Grazing animals in the open had wonder for me then and will always have," he has written. Over the years, when he has described a character as "horse-faced," it is a special mark of esteem.

Even at the age of four, wanderlust urges were stirring in young Carl Sandburg. He almost said "Giddap" to a team of horses, but he was plucked from the wagon seat in dishonor at the crucial moment.

When he was four, the Sandburgs moved to the house that Carl remembers best. In size, it was much "grander" than the small cottage. With its ten rooms went a double house number, 622-624 Berrien Street. Here four more Sandburg children—Emil, Fred, Esther and Martha—were added to the family. Here, high in the attic room that he and Mart shared, Carl's young thoughts would reach out toward books and politics and religion and girls, but not always in that order.

Momentous was the occasion, in the new home, when small Carl heard his father reading a chapter from his Swedish Bible. The youngster tiptoed back, again and again, to the Book. Those queer little black

figures that looked like nothing he had seen before, marching across the pages—how could they turn themselves into speech on his father's tongue? The magic spell of reading had begun to penetrate his mind; he was falling in love with words.

In the Berrien Street house, Carl spent all his growing up years. Vivid are his memories and impressions of the lodgers who rented housekeeping rooms and contributed to his "education" in one way or another. They felt honored as "respected citizens" when a policeman was living under their roof, but Carl and Mart were especially intrigued with a journeyman carpenter who could tell some whopping good yarns about his real-life experiences during the Civil War and could make fruit pies that would put a housewife to shame. Always Carl wondered about the lodgers who came and went in the house on Berrien Street.

There was a lingering flavor of the old homeland in the Sandburg house. Swedish phrases were tossed about in conversation and the Swedish accent was always apparent when Mama and Papa opened their mouths to speak; but the children, with their parents' blessing, should grow up to speak like Americans. The Sandburgs still felt a warm kinship with their native land, but here in America, it would be different. This was the land of opportunity for honest, thrifty, hard-working people. This was their homeland now.

## Chapter Two

### The Mama

To young Clara Anderson, working in a hotel, August Sandburg came like opportunity knocking on the door. That was the way she felt about him as he courted and married her. A good, solid, industrious Swede was August Sandburg, and she was lucky to get him.

That was the way she kept feeling, as she scrubbed, cooked, sewed, mended, washed and ironed for a family that finally numbered nine in the house on Berrien Street. Life would not beat her down, nor darken her faith, even when death took two of her small sons. When it came to things like life and death, she reasoned that God made the decisions.

Of the two Sandburg parents, the Mama was the most demonstrative. Both of them abided by the Old Country maxim, "Swedes never slobber over each other," but the mother was quick to give the children a smile with love in it and a word of praise when she was pleased with them.

The house was Mama, because Mama was always there—turning around from the stove, looking up from the ironing board, or the scrubbing pail, or the

mending. Mama was a center of warmth, like the kitchen stove. Carl would never forget the warmth of the kitchen where all the Sandburg living was done in the winter, where he and Mart would toast themselves at the stove and try to carry the heat with them all the way up to their chilly garret bedroom at night. They were proud of the neat, cold parlor, where there was actually a carpet with straw under it and a handsome family Bible after awhile, but the kitchen was for living. That's where Mama was.

Carl does not mention that Mama ever allowed herself to be a weakling, although she probably lolled around in bed for a few days when each new little Sandburg was born. Even then, her mind would be on all the chores that waited for her deft touch—chores that only a Mama could do just right. Always her movements were steady and sure, and her presence was a comfort.

From her picture as a young woman, Clara Sandburg looks pleasant and capable. She didn't use any of her precious time frizzing her hair with a curling iron, trying to be a "pretty Mama." Her philosophy might be reflected in lines that her oldest son would one day write, as a mother advises her daughter:

". . . its what's under the looks that counts.  
The looks change and wither in time. What's  
under the looks, if you pray and grow and do  
rightly, that will keep evergreen, never betray  
you, never make a fool of you."

When the Sandburg family lived in the big house on Berrien Street, it was in an age when housewives

really were married to houses. No one thought of running to the bakery for a loaf of bread. The high, brown loaves were slid out of the kitchen oven, filling the house with a fragrance to make hungry children drool.

Carl remembers the chicken dinners his mother cooked on Sunday, with special trimmings when relatives came to visit. One day a week, the smell of laundry soap and clothes bubbling in the wash-boiler on the stove would be blended with a later smell of herring and boiled potatoes, the standard washday fare. Dinner was always at noon when Papa came home from the railroad yards for the midday meal.

Ironing days were a challenge for Clara Sandburg and her fellow-housewives, although they didn't know it. Irons came in two parts, the heavy bottom piece needing to be heated on the stove and then clamped into the piece with the handle on it. The "automatic device" for testing the temperature was a spit-moistened fingertip.

As the oldest boy, Carl was often his mother's kitchen helper. The chores he did for Mama have a smell of fresh air—sometimes icy air—about them. When the pump was frozen up stiff on winter mornings, he carried teakettles of boiling water to thaw it out so there would be "fiskt vatten"—fresh water—in the house. On washday mornings, as soon as he was big enough, he lugged bucket after bucket of water from the cistern. In the raw cold of winter he remembers carrying the basket out to the back yard and trying to get the clothes hung on the line before they froze solid. When he brought them in, the pieces of clothing, smelling bit-

ter-fragrant from the cold, might be stiff enough to stand by themselves.

Mending, for Clara Sandburg, meant more than darning a basket of socks. Carl remembers wearing patches on the seat of his pants, but it was nothing to blush about. He had plenty of company.

Doing justice to her family was the great concern of Clara Sandburg. When hardships needed to be faced, she would soften the edges with the light of her optimism. During "Hard Times," there was no question about eating lard on bread—and speaking a blessing that they at least had lard and bread. In her attitude, she seemed to be saying that hardships would come and go, and life would have its better moments; and life would come and go, and the eternal peace of Heaven would be waiting to enfold the weary at the end of the road.

The Mama was not a spineless household drudge trying to make the best of every bad bargain on earth. She had her spunky moments, backed up by the courage of her convictions. Women were not allowed to go to the polls and assert themselves in those days. But they could cast their votes, within their own homes, for what they believed was right.

With all her household chores for a family of nine, it would seem that Clara Sandburg would have little time to encourage vision and a thirst for knowledge in her children, but there is a gold-spun thread of awareness in Carl's memories of her sympathetic overtures on their behalf. She didn't know the meaning of the word "intellectual," but she allowed a traveling salesman to talk her into buying cheap copies of a "Cyclo-

paedia" and a "History of the World and Its Great Events" when she saw the information-hungry gleam in little Carl's eyes.

Cheap copies? August Sandburg, earning nine dollars a week at the railroad yards, thundered his outrage! Nothing was cheap when it cost half a day's wages or more, and was useless anyhow. With his father's stern admonitions about letting the children get their "eddication" in school still ringing in his ears, young Carl retreated to a secluded corner where he could devour the books and all the mighty moments of history within. All this Mama had given to him, at the risk of domestic peace and harmony. Later Carl understood more how his father felt about "getting ahead" in this new world and that his desire for "prop-utty" was part of the great panoramic sweep of American history. At that moment, he was most grateful for Mama's brave "hopes and visions," even though they had brought Papa's wrath booming down on the household.

Reading, just for the sake of pleasure and knowledge, is foolishness to practical people. Of course the Sandburgs didn't need those books. In school, they could learn the things they needed to know to make a living! There are millions of Americans today who never read a book, outside of school; and they live all right, grasping at money and gadgets, and then they die without ever having experienced the heady adventure of being lost in a book:

"Tired of wishes,  
Empty of dreams."

Reading between the lines, it is evident that Clara

Sandburg's early influence might have made Carl Sandburg realize that his life would not need to be a duplicate of his father's — that the anvil and sledge would not necessarily be his future fortune, or misfortune. Mama's imaginative, dreaming mind, a mind that could be occupied with dozens of ordinary household duties and still come alight with visions and illusions, was a shining beacon for the Sandburg children. Life might be hard, but Mama had respect for education.

Evenings, around the big kitchen table, had charm for Carl Sandburg. It was a comfortable place for the children to study and talk, sometimes to argue their individual viewpoints. Occasionally Mama would tell a captivating Swedish folk tale. Delightful, sometimes ribald, there were never enough of them. Clara, seeing her oldest son listening in rapt bemusement, could not know that one day he would immortalize "that boy whose finger got stuck to his nose" in his own "Rootabaga Stories."

Clara Sandburg was a conscience and a counselor. When Carl charged candy on an errand at the grocery store and came home with licorice dribbling down his chin, Mama scolded him. He was told to remember that the charge account was for the benefit of the whole family, not just for one greedy little boy.

Wanting to be "smart" like the older boys, Carl called out some scoffing remarks to a Negro lady. His mother told him it wasn't a nice thing to do—he should think of other people's feelings. Because there was sad softness in her voice, the message went deep.

What are the seeds of Carl Sandburg's genius? We

have looked at hardworking Clara Sandburg, who considered it a sin to waste food but risked the fury of "her man" to buy books. Here is the intellectual yearning, the groping immigrant heart asking for an extra dimension of knowledge and learning for her children in this new land.

Much of the gentle, but sturdy, dreamer and the romantic quality that rises to lofty heights within Carl Sandburg can be traced to his mother. His sister Mary fed the flame, and there would be other women in his life whose faith in his splendid destiny would deepen his respect and understanding for all womanhood.

## Chapter Three

### The Papa

August Sandburg is something else again, and perhaps he is a more complex character to put into words than plucky, visionary Clara. Often he was "a gloomy, silent Swede." Often he was stubbornly frugal. Always he was honest and hardworking, and his word was good.

That does not begin to do justice to August Sandburg. An orphan at an early age in Sweden, required to cut short his schooling to support himself, he only learned to read but never to write.

In the old country, people often changed their names to correspond with the places where they lived or worked. When they became New World immigrants, they might change their names again to make them sound more American.

August Sandburg's name might originally have been either Sturm or Danielson. The answer lies somewhere in old church records in Sweden, but Carl Sandburg feels no urgent curiosity about it. He has been too busy doing research on another great fellow. Be-

sides, you never know what you'll find roosting in your family tree, he jokingly warns genealogy addicts!

When August Sandburg came to this country, he was spelling his name "Sandberg." His own children have not been immune to the name-changing fever. When Carl, Mary and Mart reached what they considered "the age of reason," they changed Sandberg to Sandburg. Perhaps they enjoyed the idea of being "the Sandburgs of Galesburg." Carl had already decided that Charles sounded more distinguished than Carl, so he was called Charles or Charlie through most of his younger life. On his father's lips, the name came out "Sholly."

The story of Carl Sandburg's father is a story of muscles knotted at the shoulder from swinging a sledge at the anvil in the railroad yards for sixty hours each week, with no vacations. Although he was not a large man, he took the body-jarring punishment of his ten hours at the forge without whimpering, and called it a good day's work.

August Sandburg's heart felt manly pride on that January day in 1878 when he was able to say, "Det är en pojke!" This was his first son, a lad who would please him often and provoke him occasionally.

Carl grew up knowing that his father was a man who always worried about "putting something aside for a rainy day," even just a penny at a time. "Work was his sport," Carl remembers.

August Sandburg didn't want to pay out money for repairs, and the ten-room house on Berrien Street was a constant challenge to his thrifty nature. On re-

pair jobs around the house, "Sholly" became his right-hand man. He would hold the kerosene lamp while his father mended broken pieces of furniture at the basement work bench. August Sandburg was not a skilled workman but he got the jobs done.

Up and down the ladder, young Carl would carry shingles for his father when the roof needed patching. When the pump needed a new rubber "sucker," August Sandburg would let Carl down on a rope to repair the trouble. When the cistern needed its annual cleaning, he would be lowered down to shovel mud into a bucket that his father would dump.

There were some lighter moments for mischief in the house on Berrien Street. When Papa would lock up the bushel of winter apples in the closet under the stairs, Carl and Mart would squeeze through the hole at the top of the door, being clever enough to take just one apiece. Papa could be fierce about things like that, but he would really get stormy about jobs that were left undone. Once, when Carl went to play ball instead of picking the potato bugs off the plants in the garden, he heard from "Papa's strong right hand." He felt as though he generally deserved it, except for the time when a storm turned the family umbrella inside out when he had been sent on an errand. But even then, Carl could see—through Papa's eyes—that umbrellas cost money.

Going about his heavy daily chores, with an almost plodding determination, August Sandburg might be considered the last man to stir the imagination. Was there any humor in him? He had a joke or two to tell over a period of many years. Did he feel affection for

his wife? That's a silly question to ask about the father of seven children. Was he sociable? He enjoyed going to visit Swedish relatives and friends, and listening to other people talk. How did he feel about his children? Sometimes he would toss them gleefully into the air when he came home from work, and he got a special pleasure from amusing the littlest ones. Did he have any artistic talents or interests? He had picked up an old accordion somewhere and bashfully, almost apologetically, he tried to coax tunes out of it once in awhile.

Often silent, working his ten hours a day at the railroad yards and coming home to work long hours on the house, August Sandburg might have been described as morose and moody. He had an intense respect for money and "proppty." When he could scrape up a few extra dollars from his meager salary, he bought some Kansas land. This was a man's right in this great new America. He even made one trip to Kansas where a lot of good Swedes had gone to buy land and put down their roots.

Later, when a "sleeping mortgage" on some Galesburg property cost Papa a lot more money than a poor Swede could afford to lose, the whole family shared Papa's gloom. There was a feeling that "the Law" in this great new land had not properly protected the rights of an honest Swede immigrant named August Sandburg.

Even though August Sandburg always carried an indelible pencil with him, nobody ever caught him trying to write words with it. Hanging on the wall in the Galesburg Birthplace is a deed on which August Sandburg signed "his mark"—an X. When Carl was old

enough and smart enough, the precious pencil was handed to him for any writing his father needed done.

More than his shoulder that took such punishment at the forge all day that the swelling began to form, Carl Sandburg remembers his father's hands. Those hands were eroded and seamed with deep lines of toil, some of the grime imbedded beyond the reach of soap and brush.

Carl remembers the time at the age of six, walking along "holding my father's hand" as they went to view a rousing old-fashioned torchlight parade. The Galesburg Republicans were drumming up support for James G. Blaine for President of the United States. Undoubtedly Grover Cleveland was a "bad fellow" because all those good Republicans said so. At the age of six, Carl Sandburg was a staunch Republican. He was jolted when Cleveland actually was elected, and he looked around him and saw that all the Democrats in Galesburg weren't scoundrels or idiots.

In 1884, when some Republicans were rejecting Blaine in favor of Cleveland, devout Republicans called them "mugwumps." Carl heard a Blaine Republican chortle, "A mugwump is a man who sits with his mug on one side of the fence and his wump on the other."

When young Carl Sandburg was seven years old, he took his father's hand to go downtown and see a memorial procession honoring the dead President and Civil War hero, Ulysses S. Grant. Even though the boy was impressed with the fact that President Grant had been a great general in the war to free the black people, his attention kept shifting to a little girl in a pink dress who was surreptitiously eating peanuts.

At the age of ten, Carl faced the peace and mystery of death for the first time. He walked down the church aisle "with a hand in my father's hand" to look on the face of Pastor Carl A. Beckman in his coffin.

There was the crisp Christmas morning when he was walking, hand in hand with his father, to the five o'clock Julotta services at church. Gazing skyward, Carl remembered aloud that he had read about those stars being millions of miles away. When his father sniffed and said, "We won't boddér about that now, Sholly," Carl felt for a moment as though they were as far apart as the stars. Always he would ask himself if his father, with fewer burdens to bear, might not have found time to learn to write, time to joke and laugh more, time to bother about the stars.

Even though August Sandburg did not share his son's enthusiasm for books, there is a grin behind Carl Sandburg's words as he tells about his father going soft and buying a book because it was printed in Swedish, and the salesman was "a cold and hungry Swede." Papa even invited the salesman to come in and eat "sill och potatis," the herring and potatoes which Mama always fixed on washdays.

There is a note of heartache in Carl Sandburg's memory as he lives again a Hard Times Christmas, recalling the downcast expression on his father's face when he could give the children only a small bag of candy and a large orange apiece, with no extra toy or piece of clothing.

Although the Mama learned to juggle the English language quite adeptly, with some charming old coun-

try variations, the Papa kept his Swedish way of pronouncing words all his life.

August Sandburg had no bad habits like drinking, smoking or gambling; and he had not only physical strength but strength of character, too. Once, when he was serving on a jury, he steadfastly refused "to make an example of a Negro" who was on trial on flimsy evidence.

Around his father, "Charles" Sandburg had good moments and bad moments. His childhood was not easy, but he looks back with compassion and affection. Carl realized that his father nurtured his own special dream, even through Hard Times. In the old country, only "gentlemen" could own property. Here in America, in the late 1800's, if you forced yourself and pressed yourself and your family almost beyond endurance, and didn't run into too much hard luck, it was barely possible that you could own some pieces of property before you died. Carl saw the heavy work week sapping his father's honest energy, making him more severe than he might have been, more anxious about that shadow of "a rainy day" swamping his dream of owning property.

There is no resentment in Carl, even though Papa's soberness and occasional fierceness might have driven a wedge between them. Sometimes bitterness fuels the fires of genius. Carl Sandburg did not need it. He saw that August Sandburg disciplined himself more than he disciplined anyone else. The piece of metal on the anvil took no more punishment than the man, a human being. Going home weary at night, Papa would keep driving his body and spirit.

An author must discipline himself in ways that non-writers cannot comprehend. For years and years of an author's life, for all his life perhaps, he must juggle two demanding jobs—the job that the world expects him to do, and the writing he knows he must do. The hours will be too short and the strain often intense, but he will not stop to ask himself why he is taking such a beating.

A boy, grown to manhood, would some day write:

"Lay me on an anvil, O God.  
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.  
Let me pry loose old walls,  
Let me lift and loosen old foundations."

Carl Sandburg has much of his father in him.

# Book Fever

"Mr. Sandburg, do you think you'd have grown up differently if you had been born into a wealthy family—if your father had been a millionaire?"

"I would have read the same things — the Rollo books and Horatio Alger and 'The Boys of '76' and all the other books I cared so much about!" Brushing aside the idea of a million dollars, Carl Sandburg spoke with shiny-eyed animation. Wealth, to him, meant memories of reading. "And the newspapers—I used to carry the Chicago and Galesburg papers, you know. And I read them all the way through!"

Add Carl Sandburg's name to the list of distinguished ex-paper carriers! Although he had earned a few pennies collecting bottles, rags and scraps as a younger youngster, he was eleven years old when he got his first regular job with a "steady" salary—sweeping out a law office and cleaning cuspidors before school every morning, for a quarter a week. After school he carried the Galesburg "Republican" on a two-mile route. He delivered to fifty or sixty customers every day for more than two years.

"I learned to cross-fold a paper so it could be thrown spang against a front door," he recalls. As he swung along, he took note of Nature changing her appearance to greet each new season. He had a close-up view of the rich and the poor, and the illiterate and literate, and all the in-betweens, on that route; and he developed a sense of responsibility toward his customers.

When Carl saw a reporter with a notebook, he felt a kinship with the man who would turn the news stories over to the typesetter, to end up in print in the very newspapers that he was delivering.

Later, Carl branched out, carrying the "Republican Register" in the afternoon for one dollar a week and the Chicago papers in the morning for seventy-five cents a week. The heavy Chicago Sunday papers were delivered by coaster wagon. Afterward, the jolly paper boys would feel "chesty" about being able to treat themselves to a nickel sandwich at the lunch counter.

Some of the Chicago papers were Republican and some were Democratic, and the customers would be considerably irritated if they got the "wrong" paper. Carl began to wonder about political partisanship. He read the papers carefully and tried to decide which side was right on the Tariff and Free Trade. Captivated by Bryan's Free Silver policies for awhile, he tried to swing his father over to the Democratic side. Later he decided that Bryan wasn't a very deep thinker. His sister Mary thought Carl would be a good lawyer because he could debate so well.

Carl kept looking around him at all the people who had come to Galesburg from the old world, seeking

something different. In the old homelands, they had been surrounded by people who spoke and thought as they did. They did have one thing in common. They expected this new country to be a land of liberty, of freedom. Carl asked himself, "When they say it is a free country, they mean free for what and free for whom, and what is freedom?" He would look at the town as he delivered papers, walking past mansions and cottages and shanties. When anyone delves into the life of an illustrious person, he discovers someone who has grown up asking questions, pondering the contradictions of life and the fortunes of humanity.

With his paper routes, picking potato bugs, selling "Pennsylvania Grit" downtown, cleaning bricks when buildings were demolished, and shooting English sparrows for a penny each when the state put a bounty on them, the boy made about twelve dollars a month in his spare time.

Meanwhile, "Charlie" was also a student at Douglas School, one of many generations up to the present day. His modern counterparts were much in evidence when the Sandburg Birthplace was dedicated on October 7, 1946, according to Fanny Butcher, columnist for The Chicago Sunday Tribune:

"It was a touching event, a deathless reminder that in a tiny three-room house beside the railroad tracks had been born a child who, because this is America, has become one of our greatest literary figures. It was touching because his fellow townspeople wished while he was still alive to make a public testimonial of their pride in a great man. . . . But the most touching and heartening part of

the dedication was the presence in the greatest numbers of the children. . . . Theirs had been the task of cleaning up the yard, helping to paint the fence, and it was THEIR afternoon when the little house was dedicated with a simple ceremony. . . . When it was over, they all rushed in to sign their names in the visitors' book. . . ."

Perhaps there may be another "great literary figure" growing up in Douglas School today, and in other schools in the country—a youngster with a special blend of genius and talent and self-discipline that must harmonize to produce literary immortality. That youngster may look like any other student in the room, except that he may day-dream a bit more. There will be one outstanding mark of identification. The future writer will be an avid, omnivorous, insatiable reader of books! Not everyone who loves books will become a writer, but it is doubtful if anyone has ever become a writer without first loving books. Not for the sake of an honor roll grade—not to make a good impression, since reading is usually done best behind closed doors—not for any special reason except "book fever."

A person with "book fever" knows that he can swing over the horizon, in any direction, without a passport or a pilot's license. He can go anywhere, do anything he wants to do, be anyone he wants to be—just by reaching up a hand to take a book from the library shelf. It's the best place to go home loaded from—the library!

Carl Sandburg, in "Always the Young Strangers," puts special emphasis on his adventures as an avid young reader. You talk to him, and you hear the throb

of life-long devotion to books swelling in his voice. And you recall that Omri Winwold told his son, in "Remembrance Rock," "The good books give you the company of men who help you find your own answers to the great questions that shake every real and true man." Carl Sandburg was speaking through Omri Winwold, sending out a message to everyone's sons and daughters.

Reviewing his childhood, Carl Sandburg has recalled, "At the age of six, as my fingers first found how to shape the alphabet, I decided to become a person of letters."

At the age of eight, an event in nearby Chicago stirred his childish interest and made him begin to think about social justice. Young Charlie had been hearing discussions about a tragic riot that had shaken the city of Chicago after a wave of strikes at the McCormick reaper works. On May 3, 1886, several men had been killed and a number of them clubbed by police during a riot at the reaper plant. Eighty years ago it took courage to accuse a police department of siding with the big companies against the common workers; but on May 4, a meeting was held in Chicago's Haymarket Square, to protest against police brutality.

While a group of people stood listening to the speakers, more than one hundred and seventy policemen came into the Square to disperse the meeting. A bomb was suddenly thrown into the midst of the milling crowd, and it was alleged that some policemen fired their revolvers haphazardly in the confusion that followed. Eleven people, including seven policemen, were killed and scores were injured.

Because they were said to have advocated violence in fighting for social reform, eight suspected anarchists were rounded up and charged with throwing the bomb. All eight were tried and found guilty of the bomb throwing. Four were hanged; one committed suicide; and the other three were sentenced to long prison terms.

Little Charlie Sandburg was just as thrillingly horrified about the much-discussed riot as anyone else—and just as eager to see the villainous anarchists get their just desserts. Still, he may have stopped being a “conservative” at the age of nine. On the way home from school, on November 11, 1887, he heard a “glad howl” in the voice of a Galesburg man as he exclaimed, “Well, they hanged ‘em!”

That “glad howl” aroused misgivings in little Carl Sandburg. If it had come from a hundred throats, it would have sounded like the satisfied howl of a blood-thirsty mob. Most people believed that justice had been done and gradually lost interest in the Haymarket Riot. It stayed in the back of a little boy’s mind, along with the echo of that “glad howl.”

Carl remembers his school days and his grade school teachers with amazing vividness. Each teacher left a special imprint on his memory, being nostalgically associated with his early love of reading and geography, and his fascination with numbers “because you could work so many changes with them. . . .” For the first few years they used slates for spelling and arithmetic. Most of the “scholars” cleaned their slates with sponges, but Carl still has a mental picture of the ones

who spit on their slates and wiped them dry on their sleeves.

The young schoolboy, who had seen only the level prairies around Galesburg, had assumed that the earth was flat. He quickly leaped from the news of its being round to the remarkable fact that it revolved on its axis every twenty-four hours and had an equator and a North and South Pole. His brain was afire with all this amazing knowledge. The books in the small library at home had dealt mainly with great heroes and great events. Now he was learning about the earth, and about the explorers who had discovered that it was cold at the top and bottom and quite hot around the middle.

"Charlie" Sandburg describes his teachers with unusual respect. Some of them were Protestant, some Catholic. Some were "prettier" than others. He knew that many of them stayed on in Douglas School, inheriting one generation of young people after another. His teachers stirred the love of knowledge that was already growing inside of him. His spirit responded to the lusty reading aloud of heroic poetry. He memorized all of Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," and he still remembers a number of verses. Undoubtedly verse fifteen, with its reference to "Some mute inglorious Milton," struck a poignant vein of sympathy in a boy who felt words and phrases stirring inside himself.

Another of his favorite boyhood poets was Eugene Field. Like any sensitive youngster, Carl must have blinked away the mist in his eyes when he read "Little Boy Blue." The sixth grade pupils learned that Eugene Field had attended Knox College, over "across the tracks" in Galesburg. When Carl started delivering the

Chicago "Daily News" on a carrier route, it made him feel close to Eugene Field to read his column, "Sharps and Flats" in the big city newspaper.

The sixth grade teacher loved Longfellow's "The Psalm of Life" best of all, and Carl carried the "music and hope" of the poem in his mind for years after. He thought Mr. Longfellow had said something profound when he wrote, "things are not what they seem." Did young Carl Sandburg—with a fresh patch reinforcing the seat of his pants, using store wrapping paper in school to save the price of a tablet—ever suspect that he might be leaving "footprints on the sands of time"?

In the sixth grade, the class studied botany and geology in the open countryside. They hammered rocks apart, and their teacher instructed them in fossils and leaf prints.

That year, with an inspiring teacher, Carl Sandburg got acquainted with books in earnest. He was not just reading them—he was living in them. One of his favorites was Charles Carleton Coffin's "The Boys of '76." "The book made me feel I could have been a boy in the days of George Washington and watched him on a horse, a good rider sitting easy and straight, at the head of a line of ragged soldiers with shotguns." Fired with Revolutionary enthusiasm, Carl told one of his friends "he could have cut the guts out of British Lord North." Mart might have thought his older brother Carl was always sharing the attic bed with him, but, "There were nights I rolled up in a blanket and slept alongside Marion the Swamp Fox in the marshes of South Carolina."

Now Carl was "meeting" Napoleon and General Na-

thaniel Greene and dozens of other heroes who had contributed to the destinies of nations. He thought that Charles Coffin didn't do the Civil War enough justice in "The Boys of '76." Perhaps he was already visualizing an ideal book about the Civil War.

Books were Carl Sandburg's friends, even when he had to read them in the freezing attic. Even with all of his outside jobs and school work and helping around the house, he made reading time for himself.

Certain impressions seem to be carved deeply, for all time, in Carl Sandburg's mind. When he was twelve years old he worked on a farm during haying time. Mostly he remembered the farmer got a sick-minded satisfaction out of being mean to his wife and making her cry. "What I caught was that he got some kind of enjoyment out of snarling at her and shaming her before other people."

In the Fourth Ward School, the boys had forerunners of the comic book—nickel detective stories, which were swapped from hand to hand and often were read behind open geography books. "Charlie" got disillusioned with the pat endings in those nickel thrillers. There was much more intrigue and suspense in the morning newspapers from Chicago where there was plenty of real-life crime going on. Carl decided that reality had much more color and excitement than those cheap detective stories. He liked good, thick books better, anyway. It was forty years before he ran into anyone else who had read both volumes of John S. C. Abbott's "The History of Napoleon Bonaparte."

During the grade school years, there were the usual games and scufflings and fights during recess, and the

eternal pea-shooters and spitballs in the classroom. Carl suffered his most embarrassing moment when one of his teachers intercepted a note he passed across the aisle to one of his cronies. There was a "shameful" little four-letter word in it, and "Charlie" writhed with anguish to see his teacher, whom he respected with all his heart, reading what he had written. After school, he had to write "Trifles make perfection and perfection is no trifle" on the blackboard two hundred times. He kept wishing he had "censored" that piece of "literature," and he stopped passing notes.

In physiology class there was quite a bit of talk about what strong drink would do to one's stomach. There were colorful pictures to show that it would change the inside of a drunkard's stomach to a "raw rotten-radish color with rust spots." Later, Carl signed the temperance pledge at the Mission.

When Carl attended the seventh and eighth grades, there was a man named Henry R. Sanderson living across the street from the Grammar School. Abraham Lincoln had been Mr. Sanderson's guest, even taking a bath at his house when Lincoln came to Galesburg to debate Stephen Douglas at "Old Main" on Knox College campus. There were some Civil War veterans living in Galesburg, going about their business just like anyone else. Until Carl Sandburg began to study the Civil War in detail, he didn't realize the greatness of these quiet men and the "wild and bloody battles" that at least one of them had survived.

In school, Carl began to notice that people weren't all alike, that they differ in everything from race and religion to physical handicaps. He took just enough

notice to decide he wouldn't let it make any difference in his attitude and treatment of his fellow human beings. He had already figured out that rudeness and lack of compassion are the worst handicaps anyone can have.

Answering advertisements was an exciting hobby in those days. Carl sent away for a membership in a secret society that was so secret that he couldn't find anyone else in Galesburg who belonged to it.

Carl spoke of Miss Hague, his eighth grade teacher, as a "truly great teacher. . . . She knew her books and would have loved them whether she taught them or not." She inspired in him an even deeper interest in American History. From "A Brief History of the United States," he learned about our country "from the time of the early Indians on through President Grant." He caught the feeling of continuity, of a spirited young nation shifting from one plateau of unprecedented progress to another.

For three years, between the ages of nine and twelve, Carl and some of his friends trudged more than four miles each way to the Knox County Fair in the Fall. Over the board fence, they watched the "fastest horses in Knox County" being raced. The high point of the day was the investment of a precious nickel to listen, through earphones, to brass band music and spoken words on the amazing Edison Talking Phonograph. When he heard about the startling new invention, Papa shook his head. "Wat will dey tink up next?"

Young Carl Sandburg learned about stage glamour from all sides of the footlights. If the "hero-worship-

ping" boy did not have a dime to sit in the top of the balcony and eat peanuts and watch everything from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" to magicians and minstrels, he would go to the depot to watch the celebrities arrive. He was not as impressed with Henry M. Stanley, the African explorer, as he was with Fridtjof Nansen; because Stanley "was mostly a Famous Writer while Nansen was a Great Norseman and a Viking with a heart for all human strugglers." Even boxers like John L. Sullivan and James J. Corbett were among the theater performers in those days. Carl and some of the other boys were "local talent," and they also distributed handbills and helped with stage chores. It was a blow to Carl when the Opera House burned down, because he had so many "grand memories" of it.

Carl and his gang followed the lamplighter with his ladder, and they saw the first "crackling" electric lights come on in Galesburg. When there was a suicide in the neighborhood, they rolled wondering eyes at each other — still young enough to enjoy the sensational aspects, but old enough to be terrified at the thought of a man's taking his own life. You catch the feeling that these youngsters didn't miss anything that was going on.

Galesburg was thick with the atmosphere of higher education. Knox College, Lombard College, and even a business college, made it above average for a city of 20,000. Carl felt a groping sense of awe at the sight of so many college students, when he and his barefoot friends sneaked up into the Lombard chapel gallery to view the Commencement Exercises — pondering what formal education was all about and how it would

feel to have it. Maybe Carl learned more about education by reading a book by Edward Eggleston, called "How to Educate Yourself." It told him how to analyze his thinking and probably made him even more mentally restless than he was before.

The boys prowled around Lombard campus and introduced themselves to the first real skeleton they had ever seen, in the natural science room.

Even though Carl was born too late to see Jonathan Blanchard, who was president of Knox College from 1845 to 1857, he visualized the dynamic ghost of Blanchard still raving against the Masons through the streets of Galesburg, still dramatizing his hatred of sin by bellowing and stomping the streets like a self-appointed Angel of Doom. Acting as though he enjoyed his hatred!

Carl Sandburg writes with mixed emotions about John Van Ness Standish, world-traveler, horticulturist, and president of Lombard College in 1892. Cultured to the topmost branch of his family tree, President Standish was a "peppery" individual who resigned as president of Lombard after three years, and then left his entire estate to Knox College. Carl remembered that the scholarly pedagogue once patted him on the head in passing as Carl loitered with some of his friends at the college.

If several of the distinguished faculty members of Lombard and Knox College ever took sharp notice of a certain barefoot boy dawdling around, they might have been dumbfounded at the thought that he would grow up to be a famous poet and author, much more famous

than they were, and write some mighty penetrating personality sketches about them that would be read all over the country and the world!

# Little Man, You've Had a Busy Day!

"My leanest, hardest years?" Carl Sandburg paused, trying to recollect. He was not turning a bitter eye inward, as though memories of being downtrodden might be crowding his mind. He has written again and again, "Hard work never hurt anyone." Now he said, "Why, those years when I was twelve-thirteen or so. Yes, those were the hardest. When I went delivering milk, lugging a heavy milk can along the street, from customer to customer, pouring milk into jugs at each house. . . ."

Carl Sandburg left school when he was thirteen, after he had finished the eighth grade, and soon found himself in the milk business. It was two miles to the dairy barn, and he would cut through the warm depot on the way, getting an early morning lift from the sight of people joking as they ate breakfast.

Carl's morale needed a bolstering before he started on the milk route with his glum, morose boss. Carl wouldn't have minded his wet, freezing feet so much if the company had been better. Even though the boy told his employer one day that his throat was sore, there was no comment. It was a case of business as

usual, seven days a week. Carl felt he had to keep going. The railroad business was bad, and August Sandburg's working time had been cut in half. Young Carl's wages of twelve dollars a week were helping Mary to finish high school so she could be a teacher. If his throat hurt too much, the boy could try to lose himself in the thought of Mary's textbooks that he was able to read, especially John Fiske's "Civil Government in the United States" which taught him so much about "law, government, history and people."

Young Carl kept pouring milk into jugs for customers, hoping his sore throat would go away. His two little brothers—Emil who was seven, and Freddy who was two—came down with the same sore throats, and the doctor put a DIPHTHERIA quarantine sign on the door.

Uneasily, Carl kept lugging the heavy milk cans around and pouring milk into pitchers at people's houses.

Finally he had to take a short "vacation" from his job. When he went back to the milk barn after Emil's and Freddy's funeral, there was no small gesture or word of sympathy from his employer. Did Carl hate the man? No, he felt sorry for him—for a man who could "act so mean to himself."

When Carl speaks of those hardest years, they probably were all tied up with his memories of two little brothers he lost, and the grief of his family, and the heartache that he and Mart hid behind frozen faces until they were alone in the dark garret.

Carl Sandburg grew up among the "have-nots," sometimes working beyond his strength and age and

size, while he was still a young boy—carrying water for a road crew, selling refreshments and running the boat concession at a Lake George resort, and harvesting ice on that same lake one winter.

The first stage of the ice harvesting job, on the night shift, was fairly attractive. Out on the frozen lake, poling cakes of ice onto the ice house conveyor belt, Carl might sometimes look up at the stars and feel some dormant Viking blood surging in his young veins.

His week of exquisite torture in the ice storage house was harsh enough to make a reader's muscles ache, but he stayed with it until all the ice was packed in sawdust. Weighing only one hundred and fifteen pounds, Carl had to wrestle with cakes of ice almost as heavy as he was, clamping tongs into the unwieldy chunks as they came off the conveyor belt and trying to slip and slide them into rows where they would remain until summer. If he faltered too long, he might hold up the rest of the men along the conveyor belt.

Coming home to bed at dawn, he had to talk his anguished, outraged muscles to sleep, one by one. Those rebellious muscles fought back with nightmares. Clara Sandburg's heart must have twisted with helpless compassion when her nightmare-driven son tore down the stairs to tell her that the house was on fire. Pausing in her ironing, she sent the boy back to bed with soothing words. At one dollar and a quarter a night, it was the best money he had ever earned; and he somehow dragged himself through the long-drawn week until the job was done.

Pain? Carl would admire Emerson who wrote, "He has seen but half the Universe who never has been shewn the house of Pain."

Later, Carl would clamp "steel tongs" into words grim and unwieldy as cakes of ice, sliding them into disciplined patterns, so it would seem that some of the ice and steel of that week got into his mind and stayed there.

There was a "melting side" to Carl's young life, too. He would not want it thought that there was always a violin wailing "Hearts and Flowers" in the background! There were good and pleasant moments to balance the harshness, and Carl made them even more pleasant by valuing them in his mind.

Carrying the cans of milk on his route, Carl had already glanced with shy appreciation at the pretty young girls who sometimes came out with the family milk jug. He had looked up with special respect at one of the gentleman customers. Newman Bateman, a president of Knox College, had been the last man to shake hands with Abraham Lincoln when Lincoln went to Washington to be inaugurated! The young boy began to seek first-hand information about his hero from Mr. Bateman and other Galesburgians who had known Lincoln.

Carl Sandburg remembers that religion was an important part of his youth. As a small child in the Swedish Lutheran Church, he heard sermons on sin and its dire consequences. His eyes dreaming up at the murals of Moses descending from Mount Sinai with the tablets of stone, and Elijah being transported to

Heaven in a chariot of fire, his mind would ask silent questions about them. For years, his great youthful ambition was to ride gloriously up to Heaven in a chariot of fire like Elijah.

As a grown man, Carl Sandburg would speak his regret of the passing of early American art in the churches. "They were real frescoes, and typically American. What a pity that we've destroyed things like that; we should have preserved them as expressions of the art enjoyed by those who first turned the soil in the great Middle West and who lived life in the raw."

When the Swedish Lutheran Synod of the United States met in Galesburg, the Sandburgs "roomed and boarded" a delegate from distant Nebraska. They became so attached to the visitor that they said goodbye with tears in their eyes. Nebraska was so far away. They surely would never see him again unless they all went to the same place when they died, which they sincerely hoped would be Heaven!

After their beloved Pastor Carl A. Beckman died, when Carl was ten years old, disagreements about the choice of a new pastor arose to split the congregation. Carl's parents were involved in the building of the new Elim Church which eventually ran into misfortunes and made "heavy troubles for some pretty good Swedes." As a result, August and Clara Sandburg spent the rest of their lives as members of the Swedish Methodist Church. Young Carl was confirmed in the Elim "dissenters" Church.

Carl was active in a Galesburg Mission group, where "entertainments" were rehearsed and present-

ed regularly. "Cully," as his friends were beginning to call him, became an actor and singer. When he took part in a temperance declamatory contest—on the side of "total abstinence," of course—it was his sister Mary who won. Before he realized what he was doing, Cully hugged Mary, right in front of the audience.

Although he viewed the Universalists with wide-eyed fascination because they didn't believe in Hell, Carl was not much impressed with the difference in religious beliefs. There were boys of all faiths in his gang. They all looked the same when they went swimming in the "raw" down at the creek or the stone quarry, except that some of the Catholic boys wore religious medals on strings around their necks.

There were always a few people "spoiling for a fight" about religion. Carl remembers one big drunken Swede who lurched down Berrien Street one evening trying to find some Catholics to fight. Carl and Mart practiced imitating his fierce bellow.

Carl Sandburg was already shaping up to be a man who weighed human problems from all angles. Instead of developing a sense of religious intolerance—which made no sense to him—he began to think of religion in terms of social justice and dignity for all people. As a boy who had studied the catechism and been confirmed, he had some significant questions of ask of Christianity.

Perhaps it was because his mother reproached him when he taunted a member of a minority race. Perhaps he felt a special surge of pride when juryman August Sandburg refused to "make an example of a Negro." Perhaps his memory was seared by the sight of a hand-

ful of officers holding a lynch-crazed mob at bay in his own Galesburg.

Perhaps it was seeing honest, industrious men beaten down by Hard Times. Cully asked himself, "Is it the Will of God that so many people should be half-starved and ill-housed?" Perhaps it was the tragedy of the blazing inferno at the rubber factory in which some of the girl employees were badly burned and one was killed in a leap from a third-story window. As Carl and his young chums were cleaning fire-smudged bricks for pennies afterward, they kept saying, "They ought to have had fire escapes." Out of those pitiful boyish protests were to come sentences—a muted psalm of grief for the broken, mangled body of "Anna Imroth," on the ground beneath a three-story window:

"Cross the hands over the breast here—so.

Straighten the legs a little more—so.

And call for the wagon to come and take her home.

Her mother will cry some and so will her sisters and brothers.

It is the hand of God and the lack of fire escapes.

The years pass, and the memories of tragedy will fade away in the minds of most youngsters. Always in Carl Sandburg's mind there were pictures vivid with remembrance asking "Why?" Why should there be so little reverence for human life, for the life of the "little common people"?

Wherever Carl looked, there were situations that made a deep impression on him. He saw millions of people who accepted their "have-not" status without raising their eyes to ask "Why?" of God or their "bet-

ters." They accepted the idea that they were put on this vale of tears to suffer in patient, servile humility. The people, yes, the little people. Carl Sandburg grew up loving them and their simple virtues.

It was more than observation of his fellow men that made Carl Sandburg different. He was reading, reading. It could be said that he arrived at his conclusions against a background of history, literature, geography, and the emerging field of science. To say that he "arrived at his conclusions" is a poor choice of words. Anyone who keeps reading, anyone who keeps widening his field of knowledge, is a person with a flexible mind. He will not come to cut-and-dried conclusions. All his life he will be dropping more pebbles into a broad river, and watching to see how far the ripples spread each time. The new things he learns are the pebbles; the river is the life around him, rippling, shifting, changing from calm to storm and back to calm again.

In "Always the Young Strangers," Carl gives a detailed account of the trips to the dark coal bin on the west side of the house where he often had to chop large chunks of cheap coal into heating-stove size during the "Panic of 1893 and the Hard Times." It was a rough, slippery trip in the winter, "from the stove where the empty coalhod stood, through one door into a small hall, through another door out onto the porch, then down the outside stairs and around to the bin door, repeating in reverse the same trip back to the stove."

Instead of being reduced to a blob of self-pity, Carl took his imagination to the coal bin with him. Stoop-

ing in the cramped quarters, he would remember stories in "The Youth's Companion" about young boys in coal mines "who didn't have it as good as I had it." He had his imaginary friends with him; he could make believe he was a coal miner too, chopping away in that shadowy coal bin on Berrien Street.

It was fortunate that the Sandburgs had a "bumper crop" of potatoes when Hard Times pinched the worst. The boys helped their father to harvest them and store them in the basement, and Carl came to realize that having a garden, or a farm, can help a family to be self-sufficient.

It bothers Carl Sandburg to think of millions of young people growing up in this modern country without ever getting close to the miracle of the life cycle in a garden—never knowing how to cut a potato into pieces for planting, never hunting for potato bugs in the leafy foliage, never knowing exactly where to sink the spade into the ground to turn up the shriveling roots without slicing into some of the full-grown potatoes.

Because he had read so much early American history, Carl Sandburg liked to imagine how Galesburg must have looked when the pioneers came. Around the countryside there were still some whiskered old heroes who had "broken the prairie" with their plows and oxen. Carl thought they were worthy of admiration because they had "come up the hard way" and were keeping their principles. Besides, some of them had even heard Abraham Lincoln when he debated Stephen Douglas at Knox College, and that was a kind of extra glory.

Carl has special memories of the local editor, Gersh Martin, who had "the courage of his convictions and liked nothing better than to hook a hypocrite and nail his hide to the barn door."

As for Carl, he would remember wondering about Heaven and Hell, and virtue and sin, and Hard Times and good times, and all the facts of Galesburg life that charmed and dismayed him in his early youth.

## Groping and Seeking

Young Cully Sandburg did not spend all his time working at jobs or reading the books he kept taking out of the library. He was a member of a lively group of boys in the Berrien Street neighborhood. His "gang" resembled their counterparts in any generation — whooping around under the street lights at night, trooping off to swim at the creek, hanging around the butcher shop and feeling good when the butcher gave them a fat slice of sausage, playing checkers and leafing through magazines at the Y.M.C.A., and drifting over to the railroad yards to loiter around.

They gossiped about local scandals in a worldly-wise fashion that would have surprised their parents. They took the measure of the town in a way that only teen-agers can. They knew which men were jealous of their lady friends, and which ladies were jealous of their boy friends. They knew the reasons for certain "bloody" fights and an occasional murder. They knew when "consumption" terminated many a romance, in an age when lung diseases were common.

Carl Sandburg speaks of Galesburg as "a piece of the American Republic," with emphasis on its "melt-

ing-pot" qualities. Some of the first pioneers had been Conservative New Englanders who later owned most of the town and influenced its politics. There were quite a few Southern Democrats who were forgetting their Civil War sympathies. In this "piece of the American Republic" Cully could look around him and see Swedes who had become prominent citizens. Galesburg boasted a fine mixture of Swedish, Italian, Irish, Jewish, German, French and Negro families, and Cully had friends among them all.

In one of his favorite stories, Carl enjoyed telling about the crippled Negro who hung around the railroad yards with the Swedes and learned to speak Swedish. The Negro was supposed to have gotten on a train full of Swedish immigrants once and hobbled up and down the aisle, assuring the newcomers in fluent Swedish that they would turn the same color as he was after they had been here awhile too.

Cully and some of his gang would generally be among the spectators when the Salvation Army marched out to sing and pray on the street. Cully looked with wonder on the sweet-faced Lassies circulating through the crowd, making men want to dig down in their pockets for a coin. He was moved by the sincerity of the Salvation Army people as they described the dens of iniquity from which they had rescued sinners and brought them to salvation. There was an element of great human drama in the way the inspired Salvation Army people would fall to their knees in the street and pray long prayers. Most of them were selfless little people, achieving great dignity by taking care of other little people.

Young Cully Sandburg grew to notice that some of his fellow citizens were indulgent about human nature; and others reveled in harping on "the wages of sin," as though they got a vicarious pleasure out of reviewing each sordid detail of a scandal and keeping it alive. On his paper routes and milk stops, Cully had sized up the gossips and the sinners, and he had his own ideas about the virtues and intentions of both.

Carl Sandburg admires people with gumption. He saw true heroism in a frail wife and mother who nursed her consumptive husband through two years of living death, "taking in washing" to support her family. "It might have been some code in her blood from her Swedish ancestral stream, telling her life is a battle and you fight to the last with whatever you've got."

When Cully was fifteen, the Chicago Haymarket catastrophe hit the headlines again. Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld scuttled his political future by pardoning the three surviving anarchists. Probably the boy had always been uneasy because the thrower of the bomb had never been identified. Probably he was uncomfortable whenever he remembered that "glad howl" after the hanging.

Carl read and studied every word of Governor Altgeld's sixteen-thousand-word pardon. The Governor maintained that the police were equally guilty for breaking up a peaceful meeting. "Does clubbing a man reform him? Does brutal treatment elevate his thoughts?" The most important point was that no evidence had been presented at the trial actually connecting the defendants with the bomb-throwing. Had they been made to serve as "scapegoats"?

Carl had a feeling of "self-guilt" because he—as a child of nine—had been as hysterically anxious to condemn as any of the "millions of people like myself gone somewhat crazy." He came to understand what Lyman Trumbull meant when he said, "The time will come when mankind will look back upon the execution of the anarchists as we of this day look back upon the burning of the witches in New England."

When Carl was less than fifteen he had learned how it feels to be behind bars and temporarily "in trouble with the law." He and nine of his friends set out for a swim one sizzling Sunday afternoon, heading for the pond three miles away. As they neared the old stone quarry at the edge of town, its muddy waters were an immediate temptation. They had swum there in other years, but it wouldn't be quite the same because some new homes had been built in the vicinity. Still, the occupants shouldn't be able to see them distinctly without a "spy glass," the boys decided, peeling off their sweaty clothing. Eight of them were just making contact with the water when the patrol wagon, summoned by the vigilant householders, arrived.

The anxious boys, all under fifteen years old, were carted through town in the open police wagon and locked up in cells with the town drunkards and petty thieves until evening. The next day they had to appear in court to be lectured. When it sometimes seems that modern justice is not severe enough with young offenders, it is because the judges have studied the abuses of the less enlightened past.

Carl Sandburg, for all his strong beliefs in the rights of the common man, would never become a fiery-

eyed, bristling anarchist. He would never be a top-notch "hater." He grew up respecting policemen, especially the member of the force who had been a lodger at the Sandburg house. He was unhappy when one of his friends "talked back" to a policeman and proclaimed himself a "cop-hater." It appeared that his friend really had chosen the wrong road, taking to the saloons and poolrooms, and later being sent to the reformatory for petty larceny.

There was much discussion about radicals and other political nonconformists, just as there is in any day and age. Cully took note of the "first real radical" he knew as a boy. The man was a Galesburg tailor whose proud way of walking seemed to say, "I cringe before no man." If you talked to him, you learned that this man favored "a new society, a new world where no man had to cringe before another." Carl remembers him as a "skilled tailor who took good care of his wife, one daughter and two sons."

Carl became friendly with one of the sons and learned that he echoed his father's point of view. The other boy had a small opinion of "the rich having more than they knew what to do with, making first one million and then wanting another million." He called it "a fever that gets hold of them and they can't shake it off." He figured it was a contradiction when businessmen said that "the government should just govern and not meddle in private business," when the government gave millions of acres of land to the Union Pacific Railway and more "gift" money to help build the railway.

Young Carl Sandburg weighed all of this informa-

tion in the light of what he had observed and read. Years before, when the railroad workers went out on strike, he was on their side because he knew them and their difficulties. The railroad owners were distant "King Midases" whose faces he had never seen. He thought he might have been less prejudiced if he had known them and their problems too. Everybody has troubles, he had come to realize.

Living close to it, Cully had seen the railroad business in all its hazardous reality. Train wrecks, "with dead passengers strewn along the right of way," were often blamed on the long hours that an engineer was required to be on duty in a cab. Then there was the Link and Pin method of coupling railroad cars together; in "*Always the Young Strangers*," Carl gives a detailed description of the hair-raising, death-dodging feat that was considered an everyday, routine part of railroading.

With the passing of Federal laws decreeing that an engineer could operate his locomotive for no more than thirty-six hours at a stretch and that the Westinghouse automatic safety coupler had to be installed on railroad cars, the railroad owners muttered about the expense and accused the Federal Government of "regulating the railroads."

The Berrien Street gang was not too often concerned with political and social problems, and all of young Cully's thoughts were not excessively profound. The boys held their own track and field meets, and at one time they had a baseball game going almost continually in a vacant lot. For awhile Carl dreamed of future glory as a baseball player. But when he was six-

teen he gashed his foot on a broken bottle while he was tearing back to catch "a high one." He still considers baseball the Great American Sport, and his poetry is liberally sprinkled with baseball terms.

The closely-knit group of Berrien neighborhood boys, growing up with so many interests in common, decided to get together for a picture one day. There were exactly twelve of them, so they figured their fraternity deserved an exclusive name. Today there is a photograph of the "Dirty Dozen" decorating the wall in the Sandburg Birthplace.

When he was sixteen or so, Cully ran errands and carried water at the new race track near Galesburg. Harness racing was stylish at that time and Carl heard "the prairie people yelling themselves hoarse" when a world's record was broken. In "Cornhuskers," a member of the "Dirty Dozen" would some day sing a paean of praise to:

"Velvet and night-eyed Alix  
With slim legs of steel."

Carl was still reading everything he could put his hands on, including the annual copy of Hostetter's Almanac. He had gone through any number of vest pocket biographies that came with packages of cigarettes. Because he had heard that "coffin-nails" could lead to consumption, he obtained the small books from people who were less worried about the state of their lungs than he was. The biography about Sarah Bernhardt, the great actress, intrigued him—she kept her own satin and lace-lined casket in her salon! Cully was favorably impressed with the biography of "George Peabody, Philanthropist," who handed out millions of

dollars for free libraries, cultural centers and slum improvement. The "Life of Robert Green Ingersoll," a free-thinker and scoffer at stately conservative traditions, excited him for awhile.

During his teen-age years, Carl was working his musical way up from willow whistles and paper-wrapped combs to a two-dollar banjo on which he took three twenty-five cent lessons before Hard Times made a quarter seem like a king's ransom.

After a fling at being a drugstore handyman and an unsuccessful experiment with the mail order business, Carl decided the time had come for him "to learn a trade." Would he become Carl Sandburg, Barber? During a year of floor-scrubbing apprenticeship in the hotel barber shop, he also shined some distinguished shoes—shoes that belonged to men who had served nobly in the Civil War, whose feet had taken them into the halls of Congress and across the boards of the theater.

Carl decided there was nothing the matter with being a barber, but it wasn't quite the lifetime occupation he wanted. He went back to the milk business for eighteen months, with a congenial employer, decent boots on his feet, and a bountiful dinner every noon. He took pride in working for Mr. Barlow, who would discuss politics with him during the furious 1896 campaign when Bryan was opposing McKinley. Carl was having as much trouble deciding on his politics as on his jobs. He was leaning toward the Populists, who were neither Democrats nor Republicans.

On the way to work in the morning, Carl would sometimes pause at the front portals of Old Main on

Knox Campus to read once more the words inscribed on the bronze plate, words that Lincoln had used to answer Douglas: "He is blowing out the moral lights of the world, when he contends that whoever wants slaves has the right to hold them."

Anyone else, reading that plaque, would think with gentle reverence of the dead President whose body was borne home for burial in Springfield, only about one hundred miles from Galesburg, in 1865. Events would prove that Abraham Lincoln was very much alive in the mind of a certain Galesburg lad who needed to hurry off to his job at the milk barn.

Words—the magic spell of Lincoln's words—tugging at the mind and heart of the restless young son of Swedish immigrants, worrying away at him so he could be nothing as peaceable and normal as a barber, or a milk man, or a roofer! And not a potterer either. Just as he was getting adept at handling clay, the pottery burned down.

He felt himself growing moody. What did he want from life? His friends were settling down contentedly in jobs that had suited their fathers. What was the matter with him? Did he expect success overnight, like those spectacular young fellows in the Horatio Alger books who always managed to rescue the millionaire's daughter at the crucial moment and became rich tycoons in one easy leap? Would that even be what he wanted?

Carl had all the misgivings of a nineteen-year-old who thinks deeply about life and people and the state of his own mind. He looked on himself as a frustrated young man, teasing himself with thoughts of suicide in

preference to a life of dead-end jobs. Still, it cheered him up just to be able to think and read. In books, he kept learning about the misfortunes of other people and he saw virtue in setting his course by their "stars." This is the way it added up in his mind: "I believed there were lives far more bitter and lonely than mine and they had fixed stars, dreams and moonsheens, hopes and mysteries, worth looking at during their struggles."

There was that business of being lonely, with people all around him. Some day he would appreciate the "pleasure of solitude" that an author needs for concentration purposes. Now he was in the formative stage, sorting out his ideas about people and their many pre-occupations. Even though he and some of his friends had organized a dancing club and he loved to dance with girls who were "smooth" dancers, he still felt tongue-tied around them.

Cully surely had an eye for feminine charms. He noted that a certain girl had "an apple blossom face," and another was "mysteriously beautiful." He would get lyrical about the "willowy young ladies" in those days of corsets and bustles, when skirts swayed gracefully down to the sidewalk. Even though he might only have dared to admire them out of the corner of his eye, Carl Sandburg has given literary immortality to many an attractive Galesburg young lady of his day.

Carl Sandburg was also taking note of the humor of his era, and he recalls some old saws and wheezes that range all the way from delightfully funny to frankly "corny." There was the one about the factory girl who said of the foreman, "He chews the rag. Listen

to him and you get lint on your lungs," and the one about the despondent businessman who sighed, "I started on a shoestring, and all I've got now is the shoestring."

People were still talking about Mrs. O'Leary's temperamental cow that kicked over the lantern and started the Big Chicago Fire. Galesburg felt the influence of the great city of Chicago, a metropolis that sounded fascinatingly wicked with its front page stories of corruption in government and city politics, with "juries that could be bought" and murders that "conveniently" went unsolved. Travelers were warned to beware of Chicago "city slickers" who would try to take advantage of their small-town innocence.

When Carl Sandburg was eighteen, he managed to go on a sight-seeing trip to the roaring, noisy city of Chicago, enjoying himself for three days on a dollar and a half. It gave him such an incurable case of itching feet that he decided to go out and see some more of this great country.

After saying goodbye to his bewildered family, he headed West in a boxcar one June day. On Mark Twain's own Mississippi, he unloaded kegs of nails to earn his river passage to Keokuk. Washing dishes and working in restaurants, chopping wood and harvesting hay and threshing wheat, he worked his way West to the place where he could feast his eyes on the majestic Rockies.

Even though he hitched rides in empty freight cars and sometimes balanced himself precariously on the couplers between boxcars, he worked for his food and a place to "flop," unless he slept out under the stars.

Working made him a respectable hobo, instead of a bum or a "professional tramp" who might stoop to panhandling or petty thievery.

He learned to elude the "railroad bulls," the police of the railroad yards who tried to keep hoboes and bums from riding free in freight cars. He learned that some of them could be tough—almost as tough as the Negro railroad guard in the yards at Galesburg who seemed to have some private grievance eating away at him.

Carl was learning to know a different breed of people in the hobo jungles and getting more "self-confidence" by talking to strangers he was passing like ships in the night. Most of the men he met and worked with were jolly, some brooding and morose. He didn't know exactly what influence his rambling, highly-informal travels were having on him. It was a new "slice of life," and he was learning from it. In an old book he bought for a nickel, he kept refreshing his mind with William Knox's poem that goes: "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" which had been one of Abraham Lincoln's favorite poems.

In Kansas, Carl spent a few days as a harvest hand in Pawnee County, a place that his father had actually visited to buy some land which he later sold. Being there made Carl feel like one of the old "landed gentry," but it was the one place where a Swede farmer referred to him as a "bum."

Freezing at night and doing sweaty field work in the daytime, Cully Sandburg was hardening himself for whatever might come. He knew the Angel of Death had passed him by a number of times when he went to

sleep braced on the couplers or clinging to the top of a freight car. Considering the risks he took, it was a good thing his mother couldn't see him.

When he started getting homesick, he headed back to Galesburg to tell his anxious family about some of the less daring of his adventures.

Being a "world traveler" now, he felt easier and more relaxed about talking to people and not so worried about the future. He still felt at loose ends about steady employment, not realizing that he had started years ago on the road that would take him onward and upward. Groping and seeking, who knows where he is going?

Carl Sandburg had started on his way when he opened his first book, when he began to read every story in the newspapers. He had started to discipline himself, mind and body, when he shouldered a paper bag and started out on his long newspaper routes at the age of eleven, always keeping himself company with the thoughts in his mind.

Somewhere in each individual's youth, the seeds of his future character are planted and begin to mature. Strong branches, groping always toward the sun and stars, will survive. Carl Sandburg knew more than his share of the storms, but he shrugs them aside in his counting of the sweet and precious moments. Sooner or later, he discovered, the sun and the stars would come out.

Even when his muscles ache and burn, and his spirit aches and burns along with them, a young man can wonder and dream.

## Puerto Rico, Here We Come!

A biographer, taking the wrong driveway while seeking the Sandburg farm, might find a house painter at work.

It will be a reminder. "You were learning to be a house painter yourself, Mr. Sandburg, before you went to Puerto Rico. It seems as though you've done everything."

The Sage of Connemara allowed as how he hadn't done quite everything.

Young Cully Sandburg, working as a house painter's apprentice in 1897, had his mind on conditions in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the two remaining Spanish strongholds in the new world. The situation in the two small islands was comparable to that of the thirteen American colonies under George III — with unfair taxes, Spanish control of trade, and arrogant contempt for the rights of the native Cubans by some of the Spanish officials. Spain crushed revolt after revolt, and finally sent an "iron man" called General Weyler to bring the Cubans to their knees after a revolution in 1895.

Carl kept reading in the newspapers about General Weyler's ruthless tactics. The General was accused of being a tyrant, of subjecting more than one hundred thousand helpless women and children to horrible privations by cooping them up in barbed wire barricades where more than half of them died of starvation, disease, and exposure.

A reading of out-dated history books will also turn up sentences like these: "We sympathized with the Cubans, and we also wanted to protect our own interests on the island. By 1895 many Americans had sugar plantations there, and our Cuban trade amounted to one hundred million dollars a year. The war ruined this trade. American businessmen wished to have the destruction of property in Cuba stopped and profitable trade resumed. Many Cubans, too, wished us to intervene." It is necessary to read books to realize that history keeps repeating itself.

A young man christened Carl Sandburg, who still thought of himself as "Charles" most of the time, saw the Cuban revolt as a crusade for human freedom. President Cleveland, as well as his successor, President McKinley, hoped that the Cuban troubles would be settled peacefully. Then the American battleship, "Maine," visiting in the harbor at Havana, was blown up on the night of February 15, 1898, and two hundred and sixty men were killed. The fighting-mad cry, "Remember the Maine!" rang through the land.

It is quite certain, now, that Spain was innocent in the Maine affair, and the mystery has never been solved. But the shock of indignation furnished the spark that involved the United States in the Spanish-

American War. When war was declared, Congress passed a resolution that Cuba was by right free and independent, and that we would withdraw our armies from the island as soon as order was restored.

A zealous young patriot, Carl Sandburg went into Company C, Sixth Infantry Regiment of Illinois Volunteers, on April 26, 1898. He was dedicated to the purpose of avenging the sinking of the Maine, and ridding the Cuban freedom fighters of the stony-hearted General Weyler.

Twelve hundred recruits of the Sixth Illinois Volunteers spent about two months drilling at Falls Church, Virginia. Because Washington, D. C., was only five miles away, Carl and some of his buddies had an opportunity to visit the Nation's capital city.

The Lincoln-conscious recruit from Galesburg took a long look at the outside of the Peterson house where Abraham Lincoln died and then went over to Ford's theater building across the street. Carl recalls that the theater building was much the same as it is today. The assassination of the President seemed to have started a chain of misfortunes. Public sentiment kept Ford from using it as a theater again, although it was considered one of the finest in the country. The Government took charge of the building, removing the theater furnishings, and using it for the storage of records and later as office space for the War Department. In 1893, all three floors of the building collapsed, killing twenty-two clerks and injuring sixty-eight others. In 1894, the building was authentically restored to its 1865 condition, and was purchased by the Government in 1896.

What was going on in the mind of the uniformed young recruit from Galesburg as he stood on the site of the greatest American tragedy of all? Could he close his eyes for a moment and hear the alleged "glad howl" of that hysterical voice exulting, "Sic Semper Tyrannis!"? Did Carl Sandburg, the son of Swedish immigrants, just stroll casually around like anyone else in that historic shrine, making a hallowed hush of the fierce reverence he felt during this "personal encounter" with the martyred American President—already a figure of destiny in his "mute" dreams?

Carl Sandburg knew that "Sic Semper Tyrannis" did not fit in with his picture of Mr. Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln felt deep compassion for humanity. Carl reasoned that General Weyler in Cuba would be eligible for a name like "tyrant" because he abused helpless women and children.

When the Volunteers from Illinois sailed into Guantanamo Bay on July 17, 1898, the fighting was already finished. The men were transported to a beach near Guanica, Puerto Rico—Carl likes to spell it "Porto Rico"—to get a head start on the war there. The expedition inland was pure misery, with "ravenous" mosquitoes descending like the dive bombers of the future; with rain and mud adding up to stinking August humidity—and beans, beans, beans.

The beans were preferable to the tinned beef that the meat trust had sold to the Army. This delicacy, which the servicemen referred to as "Red Horse," "Embalmed Beef" and a long list of unprintable epitaphs, later involved the meat trust in a nationwide scandal. You could put a picture of a motherly old lady on the

tin and call it Aunt Matilda's Tinned Beef, but even a reluctant sniff was enough to turn a soldier boy's face green.

Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders had just made history with a gallant charge up San Juan Hill in Cuba. Uphill was about the only way to go on the Puerto Rican terrain, so the Sixth Volunteers were slated to cover themselves with glory too. The men were ordered uphill on an eight-mile march. Loaded down with heavy bedrolls, they didn't exactly charge; they plodded and slogged upward, and some of them fell from sunstroke and exhaustion. Later, the War Department would be accused of gross inefficiency. Men had been sent to fight in midsummer, in a tropical climate, in the same hot woolen clothing that was worn by the Army of the Potomac and for Indian fighting on the northern plains. Not a shot had been fired when the news of surrender reached the stumbling Sixth Illinois Volunteers, dragging themselves doggedly up that alien hill in Puerto Rico.

Carl Sandburg begs to differ with anyone who refers to the Cuban and Puerto Rico expeditions as "a pink tea party" or "not much of a war." It was some consolation that the mosquito-chewed, emaciated, beaten-down soldiers were welcomed back to Galesburg with words of praise and loud cheers. If our Army hadn't looked formidable, Spain would not have sought peace. These men were heroes.

Even in the few months he had been away, Carl noticed that his father was "moving around slower, his shoulders more bony so that the hump on the right shoulder stood out more." August Sandburg's wel-

come-home was especially appealing. He was proud to have a son who had worn the uniform of a real United States soldier, uncomfortable as that sweaty outfit must have been. He wanted to frame "Sholly's" honorable "muster-out" papers. Having a soldier-son made August Sandburg feel like a first-class citizen of these United States!

When Carl Sandburg was cornered by reporters on a visit to Washington, D. C., to open the Civil War Centennial Exhibition at the Library of Congress on October 26, 1961, he recalled his months as a Spanish-American War Volunteer with lusty language: "We were among the first troops to land on the island of Puerto Rico. We fought to break the power of Spain over the Caribbean and free Cuba. Look at the damn thing now!"

That remark leaped sixty years of history. When we declared war on Spain, Congress had resolved that we would leave Cuba as soon as an orderly government was set up. The United States can take pride in the improvement program that was instituted under General Leonard Wood during the three years of "protective custody." The Americans helped the Cubans to build up their schools, improve sanitation systems, and eradicate yellow fever.

After the Cubans had drawn up a Constitution that met with the approval of our Congress, they were told that they were free to govern themselves. There were a few exceptions, however, which changed the complexion of the Cuban state of "independence." The Platt Amendment—written into the Cuban Constitution—insisted on certain rules about Cuba's harbors,

forbade her to contract foreign debts without our approval, leased foreign bases, and reserved the right to intervene in the event of revolution or disorder. It might have been a case of clamping the lid on a sizzling powder keg for generations to come.

The United States exercised its power to intervene in 1906. With the Platt Amendment hanging over them and their industries under foreign control, the Cubans restlessly suffered the dictatorship of Machado for many years because they feared another American intervention. When they finally did revolt in 1933, the United States refrained from interfering; the searching eyes of other Latin American countries were making us self-conscious.

In the middle 1930's, the Platt Amendment was eliminated. Facing Page 468 in "The Story of Our Country," by West and West, copyrighted in 1935, there is a picture of a huge sugar mill. Underneath is this caption: "Cuba is the richest sugar-producing area in the world. Many of its largest mills and plantations are owned by Americans."

People who read books never are satisfied with surface conclusions. They judge history in terms of far-off yesterdays, as well as in the news of the moment.

If it is possible that the United States kept Machado, Batista and a number of other dictators in power for the sake of our investments in Cuba, then it is possible that we are responsible for Fidel Castro. If we could go back to the beginning of the century when we were helping the Cubans to build schools and improve their living conditions—and insisting that their

constitutional officials continue to do the same—their illiterate grandsons might not be following Castro now. Only half of the Cuban children of school age were enrolled in schools in 1950, and the figure may have sunk even lower under Batista's years of oppressive dictatorship.

Insistence on schools and education should be a prime factor in our future dealings with countries in which the illiteracy rates are high, because the Communists are always fiercely eager to go in and do the job ahead of us. The people who fled Cuba are educated Cubans; the Communists will educate those that are left. Before we even start to insist on education for other people, it may be necessary to educate millions of otherwise intelligent Americans who choose to be blithely illiterate about international problems.

There are thousands of Cuban refugees sitting around fretting in this country, trying to promote invasions that might still lead to war. Most of them are educated Cubans. These people know Spanish, and Spanish is the language of the South American countries, in which there are millions of underprivileged people who need schools and teachers. In what finer capacity could the Cuban refugees perform than to volunteer as teachers—not to teach in bitterness, but to teach with compassionate understanding, trying to head off any more “little Russian Revolutions” in this hemisphere.

There are “reading Americans” who wish that Castro, with his raw little army in the Sierra Maestra Mountains, could have turned out to be a “wise revolutionary” like George Washington, with his raw little

army at Valley Forge. We can't denounce all revolutions; we had one of our own.

There are people who read Cuban history, and they have a right to say, "Poor little Cuba!" They also have a right to say, with Carl Sandburg, "Look at the damn thing now!"

Of course we still have a great deal to do at home; but we should be doing at least as much, internationally, as the Communists are doing, if we don't want the rest of the world to keep going smash.

## “The Terrible Swede”

Because he had kept his mind alert with so much reading, Cully Sandburg had found himself being treated with respect and special friendliness by college students who were his comrades in the Sixth Illinois Volunteers. He probably had done more reading than they had.

After attending a series of dinners given by local groups in honor of the Puerto Rican campaigners, Carl was asked if he would like to become a student at Lombard College, with free tuition during the first year.

The calm glow of hopes fulfilled must have lighted the face of Cully's mother. She had seen him stumbling and fumbling around with his life ever since he had finished the eighth grade, working hard but without a sense of direction. And now, in one short generation, Mary was already a schoolteacher, and Cully would be an American college student. Clara Sandburg must have said often in those days, “God is good to us in this new land!” When that book peddler had come around with his persuasive sales talk, she had known

how to translate the dreams in her son's eyes; and she had not been wrong.

Carl got a spare-time job with the fire department and added sliding down a brass pole to his other accomplishments. Sometimes he had to rush out of class when the fire alarm sounded, but he was getting an education in Latin, English, inorganic chemistry, elocution, drama and public speaking. He was heading for the place where he would work with his brain instead of his muscles as his immigrant father had done.

At the end of his freshman year at Lombard, Carl was chosen as a candidate to West Point. In "Notes for a Preface" in his "Complete Poems," Sandburg sums up the experience with one sentence: "At twenty-one I went to West Point, being a classmate of Douglas MacArthur and Ulysses S. Grant III—for two weeks—returning home after passing in spelling, geography, and history, failing in arithmetic and grammar."

It appeared that Carl Sandburg was not cut out to be a United States Army general either, but the shock did not slow him down. As captain of the Lombard College basketball team, he earned the nickname of "The Terrible Swede." He delivered a prize-winning oration that was published in the Lombard Review in 1901. He was active as the editor of the college monthly, the "Cannibal," and edited an issue of the school annual. To support himself, he was a bell-ringer at Lombard, a gymnasium janitor, and the college correspondent for "The Daily Mail."

Cully Sandburg's evaluations of the people who walked along Berrien Street had always been perceptive, but he hadn't dreamed of the influence that one

of those wayfarers would have on his future as a writer. Carl had often seen Professor Philip Green Wright "bent forward peering through his spectacles" as he hurried to his eight o'clock class at Lombard. What an unvaultable void there had seemed to be between the little Sandburg boy with a patch on the seat of his pants and a faculty member of a university! Professor Wright had looked so serious, with his neck stretched out as though trying to overtake some elusive thought, that the neighborhood youngsters had gleefully imitated him.

Professor Philip Green Wright became a hero to be cherished by a young student who also loved the "feel" of words. Professor Wright has been described as "a teacher whose vision was not limited by classroom walls," and the world will never have enough of that kind.

The teacher sponsored a small, select group of would-be authors, dubbing the organization "The Poor Writers' Club" for fairly obvious reasons. The undergraduate members — Cully Sandburg and two other students — met in the Wright study on Sunday afternoons to discuss and criticize what they had written during the week.

Of these literary conclaves, Professor Wright has said, "Very delightful, innocent and refreshing, were those meetings, when our minds wandered the free fields of fancy and imagination." Professor Wright was one of the group of Americans who had begun to see Abraham Lincoln as a giant in the pages of American history. A fair poet himself, the teacher believed in the

ideal of American democracy and all its hopes and promises.

Even though Carl Sandburg later developed a quite different style and approach, it was obvious to Professor Wright that young Sandburg was endowed with creative talent. He was more than a student who wanted to write for the sake of being a writer. He had searched his own mind and he had taken a look at the world around him, and he had something to say about both.

Carl Sandburg did not quite finish college. He takes his place in the world of literature on a list of "unbranded mavericks" — which includes Frost, Untermeier and Nobel Prize winners Hemingway, Faulkner and Steinbeck — who have managed somehow to become eminently articulate without a regulation-type college diploma. To keep them from feeling academically frustrated, they have been showered with scores of honorary degrees by distinguished universities.

After Lombard, Carl worked as an advertising manager in a department store, and then he became a stereoscope salesman. The stereoscope was a wondrous contraption—it's surprising that any customer could resist it. It was an optical device, and the viewer would peer through two inclined lenses that would shift the flat images on a double picture together to make them stand out in bold relief. There are some modern copies of the amazing stereoscope, but there was nothing quite like the old-fashioned kind. Perhaps there is a difference in the choice of pictures, which are mainly scenic today. In the old days, there were always some boudoir-type selections, with people looking round and

firm and fully packed into long suits of underwear. There was the inevitable flirting husband, too, tickling the pretty maidservant under the chin. And there were housewives, with frilly "dust caps" on their pompadours, flourishing rolling pins.

Young people who visit the Sandburg Birthplace in Galesburg always consider Carl Sandburg's original stereoscope—the one he used as a "demonstration sample"—a great attraction.

After some successful days as a stereoscope salesman, Carl would be free to write and think and read authors like Emerson, Tolstoy, Whitman and Boccaccio. He was still keeping in touch with Professor Wright who did a bit of publishing, under the name of the Asgard Press, in his basement.

In 1904, Professor Wright went down to the small print shop in his basement and began to set type for a slender volume of verse called "In Reckless Ecstasy." It was followed in 1905 by "Plaint of a Rose," in which "A pale, half-withered flower speaks to its 'heedless' sister of great beauty: 'My existence has been passed in your shadow.'" Also in 1905 came "Incidentals," a collection of essay-type compositions in which young Sandburg proclaimed his "optimism and faith in humanity." On page 7, "The Terrible Swede" evaluates the early buffettings of fate and scatters them with a sentimental smile:

"The hopes of youth have been scorched and scarred in me but the romance of life has not burnt out nor the glory of living been extinguished. I may keep this boy heart of mine, with tears for the tragic, love for the beautiful,

laughter at folly, and silent, reverent contemplation of the common and everyday mysteries."

Mr. Sandburg dismisses his neophyte published efforts with a few cryptic words: ". . . not worth a later reprint."

In the Rare Book Division at the Library of Congress, the Sandburg researcher carefully slides a copy of "In Reckless Ecstasy" out of its protecting envelope. The brownish buckram cover is cracked in spots. The bow of dark magenta ribbon, carefully threaded through punched holes, is creased by the years. A reader, opening the book with careful respect, looks at the Asgard Press imprint and remembers that Professor Philip Green Wright, and his young son, helped set type for the book and feed it into the press. Carl had punched holes and helped tie the ribbons to hold the small book together. 1904—almost sixty years ago! The slim volumes that have survived are collectors' items now.

In the introduction to "In Reckless Ecstasy," Professor Wright affirmed his faith in Carl Sandburg's future as a writer. "I do not know how the few selections which I have gathered in this little volume will affect others, but to me there is in them something of the quality of a Norse saga: inchoate force and virility, unconscious kinship of the soul with all that is beautiful and terrible in nature, and above all the delightful bloom and freshness and spontaneous enthusiasm of one who is witnessing the sunrise for the first time."

This original volume of poetry is dedicated to Carl's mother "who has kept a serene soul in a life of stress,

wrested beauty from the commonplace, and scattered her gladness without stint or measure."

But wait—it wasn't Carl Sandburg who authored "In Reckless Ecstasy"! There, under the title on the cover, is the name Charles Sandburg.

In explaining the origin of the title, Charles Sandburg writes: "Marie Corelli says it is often the case that ideas which cannot be stated in direct words may be brought home 'by reckless ecstasies of language.'" There are depths of life, Sandburg insists in that early work, that logic cannot sound. "It takes feeling." His mind had already taken to the high road of poetic reasoning.

"Charles XII of Sweden" is saluted as "Immortal Swede!" in "In Reckless Ecstasy." There are deeply-considered lines such as: "Complacency, how thou has chained thy thousands!" and "Austerity, how few dost thou bring to thy cold, pure presence!" Giving science its due, he refers to "The crash of planets and the world aflame." In "Experience" he casts a shadow of his future self in choosing "to study the map of one who looks lonely, robust, querulous, as if he had gone to a country far."

There is a classical, formal style—some critics have called it "self-conscious"—in Sandburg's early poems. Undoubtedly he is not the Sandburg we know—the poet of the "rolling, marching cadences." If he had continued to develop his early style, he might have become a distinguished poet in the formal, traditional sense. Fortunately for the world, Carl Sandburg shot off in another direction, with a lusty feeling of aware-

ness for his fellow men and his sensitive fingers on the pulse of a nation.

In the short essay entitled "Millville," near the end of the first book, Carl Sandburg was already giving fair warning. He describes the "Carryin'-in boys" at the glass factory — the grimy, stunted youngsters who ranged from nine to eighteen years of age, working nine or ten hours a day for two or three dollars a week.

Carl Sandburg, in his middle twenties, did not neglect to measure himself in cold type and make some pledges: "Constrain me to common sense; keep me from taking anything that is nailed down; purge me of any desire that may project me into a stone wall. . . . Let me reach for unknown stars that are beyond my grasp rather than clutch at baubles of custom and superstition. . . . I glory in this world of men and women, torn with troubles and lost in sorrow, yet living on to love and laugh and play through it all. . . . Above all other privileges vouchsafed us earthly pilgrims, I place the privilege of work. The brightest, most lasting happiness is that which comes from yearning, striving, struggling, fashioning, this way and that, till a thing is done."

He stated his resolve "to rise above all the petty, inevitable vexations of each day, and be cool and steady in all tumult of talk and prejudice." In a worthy cause, he would allow himself to rise up in indignation. "I will lose myself, lash, taunt and shame that man who by his superior gifts or situation knowingly darkens the lives of others. . . ."

This was young Carl Sandburg's creed, and he would cling to it with steadfast strength of purpose.

The value of Professor Wright's encouragement is beyond the power of calculating. Sensing the moments of loneliness and misgiving that are part of creative development, the wise educator knew how to relax the mind and unlock and unlimber the tongue of an aspiring young poet. It is not always easy for a young man to admit that he has a serious yearning to write poetry!

When Professor Wright left Lombard, he went first to Harvard and then to Washington, D. C., to win recognition as a Government Economist. Carl Sandburg was destined to write a profile of his beloved mentor and friend, forty years later, for the Dictionary of American Biography.

## A Feeling of Momentum

With his awakened awareness of the common man's struggle, it is not surprising that Carl Sandburg identified himself with the lusty young labor movement after he left Galesburg. During 1907 and 1908, he was a District Organizer for the Social-Democratic Party of Wisconsin.

The Social-Democratic Party had been born in the minds of people who felt that neither of the major political parties had made an honest attempt to abolish child labor, long hours of sweat-shop toil, starvation wages, and poor working conditions in general. In these days of the forty-hour work week, with at least one car in almost every garage, with modern houses in which almost every "common man" can collapse on foam rubber cushions in front of a TV set every evening, and from Friday night until Monday morning, the country is almost running out of "common men."

When John Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962, he was asked why he no longer writes with such fury and indignation about the downtrodden people. He opined that it's getting more difficult to locate an underdog these days. There are still pockets

of misery and prejudice. But, for the great majority of Americans, the road has generally led onward and upward during the last forty years.

This is the time to salute some of the men who first blazed the trail to a life of dignity for the common man. A few, in private industry, were considered slightly "peculiar." Then there were the ones who were called Reds and Anarchists and Radicals. Sometimes they were fighting against intolerable odds. The "common man" wondered if he dared join their ranks for the sake of better working conditions—he might end up with no job at all.

Still Carl Sandburg was an optimist when he wrote in "You and Your Job": "The Socialist, the class conscious working man, has generally let the alarm clock in his brain go off; he is awake to the great, throbbing human drama staged around him. And he knows that the class-struggle is no bookish bubble-thing, but a reality of blood, sweat and tears, of desires and passions."

The young idealist had vowed in his first printed book that he would allow himself to rise up in indignation "against a man who . . . knowingly darkens the lives of others." He needed only to look around him to see the men, women and children working out their lives in the shadows of industrial caverns. Looking back, it's a wonder that the Socialists actually needed to explain their "radical ideas." Carl Sandburg had studied the grim-patterned history of the fight for social justice during the nineteenth century. In "You and Your Job," Carl wrote, "One reason I'm a Socialist is because Socialists were the first to fight to abolish

child labor." He also wanted to eliminate "all conditions that make it possible for human beings anywhere to be overworked and underfed." "Human beings anywhere?" Carl Sandburg's philosophy, more than fifty years ago, was as modern as the world of today and tomorrow.

The Socialist party was dedicated to achieving social reforms through electoral successes. Carl Sandburg believed in change through legislation, in this democracy of ours. "Better working and living conditions" could be achieved by electing the proper candidates to Congress. The rumblings of eloquent phrases raised in protest, yes—the detonation of bombs and bullets, no!

In studying the names of the controversial giants in the early International Socialist movement, a sentence from one of Carl Sandburg's later books comes to mind: "Each time has its own heroes and martyrs, yet often they are not known as heroic until another and later time." Answering the American roll call would be Eugene Debs, Victor Berger, Clarence Darrow, Carl Sandburg, Upton Sinclair, Jack London and many other stalwarts. Allied with them were young English Fabians like H. G. Wells, G. Bernard Shaw, Annie Besant, James Ramsey McDonald and other international Socialists. Pacifists, they were opposed to achieving social reforms through Marxist violence.

Young they were then—and drab the world would have been without the wit of their voices and the stiletto-jabs of their pens in later years! Often despised and scorned in their early efforts, they became titans of the new social culture. As in every organization, a

few wild-eyed hot-heads on the fringes gave the International Socialists too much notoriety and the type of publicity that would harm the cause.

Those were the days when every hobo or tramp was called an I.W.W. "Mama, what's I.W.W. mean?" "It stands for 'I Won't Work!'"

By all the laws of chronological reckoning, the next volume of Carl Sandburg's autobiography will lead into the Union organizing Socialist period of his life. He, as a voice of the early labor movement, will best be able to evaluate the results. He saw the day of "over the hills to the poor farm" superseded by the social security check. He saw working men and their families enjoying a new standard of living and being able to lift their heads with the pride of deserved independence.

If he thinks the American pendulum has swung too far in the other direction, if he suspects that some modern labor unions are losing sight of their idealistic principles, Carl Sandburg will surely say so. It is a sad fact of life that power and money often breed arrogance. The downtrodden little man of today may become the rich man of tomorrow, and he may glory in treading on the downtrodden who become "beholden" to him. There are a great many questions that might be addressed to a veteran in the labor movement. We know that unions were badly needed—do you think they might be outgrowing their usefulness as guardians of workingmen's rights? Would industry have instituted benefits of its own free will, if it hadn't been for the unions?

You remember that Carl Sandburg wrote, in the

1940's, that he was not happy about the "pockmarks" that John L. Lewis left all over the country. Your mind dwells on the metamorphosis of a labor leader like Lewis, a coal miner in Iowa in his youth, progressing from legislative agent for the United Mine Workers of America in 1909 to president in 1920, later to be the first president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1937, leading the U.M.W. in and out of the C.I.O. and A.F.L. with all the dramatic flair of a Napoleon. In the early days, conservative newspapers mercilessly caricatured his bushy hair and eyebrows and bulging jowls. He was painted as a sort of growling, uncouth monster—a subject for merriment, for scorn, or for frightening children into behaving. A generation of young people grew up thinking of him as an "ape" at the industrial bargaining table. And you remember that John L. Lewis said, just a few years ago, that he hesitates to judge a man who is "running with the pack after him."

As the old years passed, the U.M.W. under John L. Lewis, grew rich, rich, rich. The stories in conservative newspapers grew kinder. Several years ago, he was presented with a set of Shakespeare by some of the distinguished businessmen who had opposed him across the bargaining table. The gift was in honor of the old days when John L. Lewis had quoted Shakespeare at the bargaining table. Now what do you know about that? A whole generation had grown up thinking that John L. Lewis could hardly get through a first grade reader, much less quote Shakespeare!

Sometimes a social reformer can become so "financially respectable" that he loses the identity that made

him great in the first place. That business about the "pockmarks" keeps intriguing us, and we remember a recent story about coal miners going on strike in Kentucky and Tennessee, mines closing because small operators can't pay forty cents a ton into the United Mine Workers' Welfare fund and still pay high wages. And you think of John L. Lewis sitting on top of that "105-million-dollar Mine Workers Welfare and Pension Fund which is financed by a 40 cents-a-ton royalty," and you wonder and wonder.

You start to ask Carl Sandburg, but he ducks the query in self-defense. "If I got started talking about labor and labor unions, I would go on all night." He was an active labor reporter for twenty years. In fact, he has been a labor reporter ever since he wrote about the "carryin'-in boys" at the glass factory, right up through the books he is writing now.

The Socialist Party was right for Carl Sandburg. He felt at home with it, writing and speaking and promoting the ideals of human dignity and justice for all mankind. If there were any empty places in his heart or mind now, they were being filled to overflowing. He had met a charming young lady named Lillian Steichen. Not only was she a Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Chicago, but she agreed with Carl's philosophy about social welfare. A devout youngster when she attended Catholic school, Lillian Steichen had almost decided to be a nun. But she decided that she might be able to accomplish more good outside the religious life.

A spare-time writer herself, Miss Steichen could speak four languages. She taught at Valley City, North

Dakota, after she was graduated from the University of Chicago. She was a teacher at Princeton, Illinois, when she met Carl Sandburg in the Milwaukee office of Victor Berger, the leader of the Wisconsin Socialists.

Six months later, in a 1908 June wedding, Carl changed Lillian's last name to Sandburg. He also started calling her "Paula." Paula, with the "night-gray eyes," chose to reciprocate by calling Charles Sandburg "Carl" again. Paula's brother was a young artist-photographer named Edward Steichen, and Carl developed a deep fondness for him too.

With her perceptive understanding for the hopes and talents of the young man she married, Paula dedicated the vast wealth of her own intelligence to the encouragement and advancement of Carl Sandburg's future. Whenever he needed her, she was there.

The young couple set up housekeeping, with some makeshift furniture, in three upstairs rooms in Appleton, Wisconsin. The rent was four dollars a month. In 1909 they moved to Milwaukee where Carl continued his Social-Democratic organizing and wrote stories for the Milwaukee Daily News.

Here Carl met his beloved friend, Abraham Lincoln, again. In observance of the Centennial of Lincoln's birth, his picture was being imprinted on newly-minted copper pennies. It was Carl who wrote an appealing salute for the occasion. Appearing in the Milwaukee Daily News, it was his first published piece of Lincolniana:

"The face of Abraham Lincoln on the copper cent seems well and proper. If it were possible to talk with that great, good man, he would probably say that he

is perfectly willing that his face is to be placed on the cheapest and most common coin in the country.

"The penny is strictly the coin of the common people. At Palm Beach, Newport and Saratoga you will find nothing for sale at one cent. No ice cream cones at a penny a-piece there.

"'Keep the change,' says the rich man. 'How many pennies do I get back?' asks the poor man.

"Only the children of the poor know the joy of getting a penny for running around the corner to the grocery.

"The penny is the bargain counter coin. Only the common people walk out of their way to get something for 9 cents reduced from 10 cents. The penny is the coin used by those who are not sure of tomorrow, those who know that if they are going to have a dollar next week they must watch the pennies this week.

"Follow the travels of the penny and you find it stops at many cottages and few mansions.

"The common, homely face of 'Honest Abe' will look good on the penny, the coin of the common folk from whom he came and to whom he belongs."

It should be noted that Carl Sandburg not only allied himself with Lincoln in an almost personal manner in the Centennial feature in 1909. He also took his place as a sympathetic and understanding champion of the "common people." His position is a reminder of Westbrook Pegler's proud boast, "I am a member of the rabble in good standing."

Carl Sandburg reported for several Milwaukee pa-

pers, not only writing labor stories but also editorials, poetry, art features and general news.

Carl Sandburg's father died on March 22, 1910. He had fallen from the branch of a tree he was trimming and had broken his "good right arm," the one that had raised the sledge above the anvil for ten hours a day, for so many years. For quite awhile, he had been getting slower and more careful. Carl recalls that he had come to have a special way of saying, "Take your time, Sholly." Lingering after the accident, it was hard for him to relax in bed during the daytime. With pneumonia and a heart complication, "he died sort of sinking away and not afraid to go."

Carl remembers that his father asked no special glory, only to do his day's work, and pay his debts with a little left over for a "rainy day," and to live in a state of honest decency among his fellow men.

In a Labor Day speech at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, later that year, Carl Sandburg asked for an end to miserably low wages for the working man and said that old age pensions were long overdue.

From 1910 to 1912, Sandburg served as secretary to Emil Seidel, the Socialist mayor of Milwaukee. The men drafted some notable legislation during that period. This is what those "wild-eyed radicals" requested in the name of social progress: wash-houses for workers, municipal building inspection, the enactment of bills to safeguard factory workers, and free textbooks for the public schools!

Emil Seidel became Eugene Debs' running mate in the presidential election of 1912, and the "black sheep" Socialist Party polled almost one-fifth of the popular

vote. As fiercely as they campaigned, it is doubtful that the Social-Democratic Party ever seriously expected to elect a president from their ranks. Political campaigning was the best way to carry their "human welfare messages" to the people.

Eugene Debs started running for President of the United States as early as 1900. He was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1855, and was perhaps the best known Socialist leader in the country.

Victor Berger was also a top figure in the party. Born in Nieder Rehbach, Austria-Hungary, and educated at the Universities of Budapest and Vienna, he had come to Milwaukee in 1879. Editor of "The Leader," a Socialist newspaper, he was the first Socialist Congressman elected to the House of Representatives in 1911, and continued to serve for a number of terms.

The Social-Democratic Party was especially "strong" in Wisconsin just before the United States entered World War I. Many of the citizens were German immigrants who opposed American entry into war against the Fatherland. The Socialists, as avowed pacifists, were the people to whom they turned for support.

The Socialist party, international in scope, became divided on the question of whether or not World War I was a capitalists' war. Brothers or not under Socialism, German Socialists turned out to fight for their Fatherland, and French Socialists did the same. Upton Sinclair, H. G. Wells, the Sandburgs, and many other notable names are listed on the roster of those who chose to serve their country first in time of crisis, and the Socialist Party second.

Eugene Debs and Victor Berger continued to fight vigorously against American participation in World War I. Berger was tried before the well-known Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis in 1918, sentenced to serve twenty years in prison, and was drummed out of the House of Representatives by his colleagues. In 1921, the United States Supreme Court reversed the decision, and the indictments of disloyalty were dismissed. Tempers having cooled, like the machine-gun barrels of World War I, he was re-elected to Congress for three more terms.

Eugene Debs served a prison sentence for his convictions as a pacifist. While he was still in prison in 1920, he ran for President of the United States and received almost a million votes. A forceful speaker, he had always been a man with a great deal of personal appeal. Even though each had adhered to his own ideal of patriotism during the tense war years, Debs and Sandburg treated each other with gentle consideration during the remaining years of Eugene Debs' life. The tone of mutual respect is reminiscent of a quotation that Carl Sandburg would some day use in his Lincoln writings. When a Northern Congressman strongly favored hanging the top Rebels during the late Civil War months, Lincoln pointed a stern finger at him and said, "Mr. Moorhead, haven't you lived long enough to know that two men may honestly differ about a question and both be right?"

Debs, who had been a locomotive fireman, was active in seeking improved conditions for poorly-paid railroad workers. This fact alone would endear him

to the man who had grown up near the railroad yards in Galesburg.

In addition to his reporting jobs and Socialist activities in Milwaukee, Carl Sandburg had taken to the road to lecture on George Bernard Shaw and Walt Whitman. To read Walt Whitman is to realize that there are many reasons why Carl Sandburg would be drawn to him, including, "O Captain! My Captain!" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd."

In 1911, while Carl was acting as secretary to Mayor Seidel, the Sandburgs' first child, Margaret, was born. In Milwaukee, Carl had met Paula, and now he had a daughter. Here he had found strength of purpose among selfless men who loved the "common people" as he did. Here he had become a crusader among the early human welfare "greats"—shabby on the outside, burning with compassion inside. The American Socialist papers, part of the history of this mighty nation, are preserved at stately Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Duke University—how the rabble hath risen!

Carl Sandburg already was aware that he shared a common bond with a certain great common man who believed in the dignity of the worker. It was Abraham Lincoln who had clearly stated the case against tyranny and oppression:

"It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—right and wrong—throughout the world. They are the two principles which have stood face to face since the beginning of time, and which will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of all humanity; the

other is the divine right of kings. Slavery is the spirit that says, 'YOU work and toil and earn bread, and I'LL eat it.' No matter in which shape it comes, it is the same tyrannical principle."

Carl Sandburg didn't need to say "eenie-meenie-minee-moe" to decide which side had his sympathy in the eternal struggle.

## The Pattern Comes Clear

The great, windy, wicked, lively city of Chicago, which had captivated Carl Sandburg in his youthful days as a newspaper carrier boy and reader, was still there. It almost seemed as though it had been waiting for Carl Sandburg and his small family.

In 1912, the Chicago "Daily Socialist" brought Sandburg to Chicago as a feature writer. A pressmen's strike was in progress on the other Chicago papers, so the socialist paper was doing a heavy business. After the strike was over, things went back to normal and circulation fell.

For awhile, Carl was on the editorial staff of the magazine "System" which was slanted toward business and industry. Two of his stories were titled "Muzzling Factory Machines" and "Training Workers to be Careful." One editorial supervisor thought that Carl Sandburg's stories about factory accidents were too sympathetic to the worker and didn't pay enough homage to the "bread-and-butter people." However, Sandburg's efforts to promote Workmen's Compensation Laws earned him respect and the offer of a job with Inland Steel as a safety engineer. Those early ef-

forts at industrial reform have evolved to a point where the management men in large industries take special pride in making certain that their plants have fine safety programs. There was a time when working men's lives and limbs were considered "a dime a dozen" in some factories.

Carl Sandburg was not the only one who took notice of industrial abuses. According to Macgruder's "American Government":

"The white or yellow phosphorous used in the manufacture of the old-fashioned match is very poisonous. Workmen in factories often had their teeth fall out or their jawbones decay. Many died from the poison. Matches made from other materials were a little more expensive. The Constitution does not give Congress power to regulate labor conditions directly; therefore, in 1912 Congress imposed a stamp tax of two cents a hundred on matches of white or yellow phosphorous. As matches sold for one cent a hundred, the phosphorous match industry was destroyed."

During the early Chicago years, Carl Sandburg was most active on the staff of E. W. Scripps' "Day Book," an adless newspaper published for and about "the people." Because there were no influential advertisers to favor, reporters like Carl Sandburg were in their glory. They could print the truth about industrial accidents, poor social welfare conditions and political corruption. Scripps published everything, even when it was poor publicity for himself. The "Day Book" naturally offended some prominent people, but Carl Sandburg was happy to be able to open his heart

and write as he pleased, even though the salary was only twenty-five dollars a week.

Although it might have been much easier for Carl Sandburg to dedicate his talents to the interests of the highest bidder, he refused to compromise his literary and editorial integrity. Because he was a great one for trying things, he did take a try at "the big money" once. He accepted a position on William Randolph Hearst's "Chicago American" for a short time, in 1917, at a salary of one hundred dollars a week—a fabulous sum for a newspaperman in those days.

After about three weeks, he realized that he was gradually being manipulated into writing "accommodating" stories for Mr. Hearst—"nice" stories about people whose activities made Carl Sandburg sick with disgust, and stories that compromised his convictions about human welfare and the rights of mankind.

Carl knew that the wealthy Mr. Hearst had turned from a radical people-lover to a radical rabble-hater when he was constantly rejected as a political candidate, even with all the power of his thirty newspapers behind him. Some books have been written about Mr. Hearst's gaudy journalism and arrogant presumptions. Often quoted are the briefly pungent lines that one critic wrote, "What can you do with a man who stands himself on a church altar and wraps the American flag about him?"

If Hearst had been a "self-made" man, Sandburg might have been more sympathetic about him, but he kept remembering that Hearst could keep going to the family-owned Homestake Gold Mines when he needed financial support. Carl got along with Mr.

Hearst all right personally, but he got out when he began to feel the pinch of the "Hearstling" collar around his neck. One hundred dollars a week—and he could have kept going up and up! In "Testament," he states his case:

"I have had my chance to live with  
the people who have  
too much and the people who have too  
little and I chose  
one of the two and I have told no  
man why."

"Testament" is from "Cornhuskers," Sandburg's second book of poetry, published in 1918. He had worked for Hearst in 1917, and was already a poet as well as a newspaperman.

The "Chicago Poems," published in book form in 1916, have not been skipped over as unimportant! The comparison between the "Day Book" job and the Hearst misadventure is most striking when they stand side by side.

Yes, those Chicago poems! Lusty, throbbing with vitality, beating a hairy chest, and shouting to the world, "Look at me, I am Chicago!" Carl Sandburg had searched the eyes of Chicago—not the discreet, well-behaved eyes in the drawing rooms—but the eyes of the common people, the workers and builders and producers, going about their business by night and by day. He had caught the hoofbeats, footbeats, hammer beats—the lip wagging, hip wagging, magnificent audacity of an overgrown city coming late to maturity. There was intoxicating flamboyance to the way he put capitals on little words, the little words of the little

man, and made them sing with the solid challenge of colossal words:

“Hog Butcher for the World,  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation’s  
Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of Big Shoulders.”

There is passionate devotion in Carl Sandburg’s poems as he salutes Chicago. Here are immortalized the shovel men, the teamster, the fish crier, the cripple, the stockyards hunky, the shop and factory girl, the children with faces pinched with hunger, the workers in their short hours of happiness and long hours of toil. The words are not maudlin or slobbering. Carl Sandburg states his case, the truth as he has seen it. These doggedly brave people are lifted up, in Carl Sandburg’s warm and gentle hands, to heights beyond the dignity of a perfumed millionaire in his marble coffin.

In Chicago poems, Sandburg says “To Certain Journeymen”:

“Undertakers, hearse drivers, grave diggers,  
I speak to you as one not afraid of your business.”

Here is “Anna Imroth”—imagined so many years ago: “Cross the hands over the breast here—so. . . .”

In “On the Way,” Sandburg flings this question in the face of a smug young “student of human nature”:

“Let us ask ourselves: What is truth? What  
do you or I know?

How much do the wisest of the world’s men

know about where the massed human procession is going?"

There is a paragraph of "poetic prose" in the Chicago Poems entitled "Bath":

"A man saw the whole world as a grinning skull and crossbones. . . . Dust to dust and ashes to ashes and then an old darkness and a useless silence. So he saw it all. Then he went to a Mischa Elman concert. . . . Music washed something or other inside him. Music broke down and rebuilt something or other in his head and heart. He joined in five encores for the young Russian Jew with the fiddle. When he got outside his heels hit the sidewalk a new way. He was the same man in the same world as before. Only there was a singing fire and a climb of roses everlastingly over the world he looked on."

Life is too short when you have a collection of Carl Sandburg's poems in your hand. You start to look up a verse—a certain phrase—a sentence. Immediately a different poem catches your eye, then another and another. An hour later, you've almost forgotten what you wanted to look up in the first place. You want to find someone and say, "Hey, listen—have you heard this one? Remember this one? And this one!"

When you are writing Carl Sandburg's biography, you want to quote from this and that and something more—and everything seems special and much too quotable. You'd like to quote everything, but Carl Sandburg's publisher would object. Besides, this book would need to stretch to an infinite number of volumes. You feel a twinge of envy for people who can open a collection of Carl Sandburg's poems and just

get lost in them—without having to pick and choose “samples” here and there.

About the time the Sandburgs moved to Chicago, a lady named Harriet Monroe started to publish a little magazine called “Poetry.” Among the early contributors were young poets with names like Carl Sandburg, Sara Teasdale, Robert Frost, D. H. Lawrence—small names then, great names now. Sandburg’s “Chicago” was featured in the March, 1914, issue and other Chicago poems followed.

Carl Sandburg’s poetry was beginning to receive recognition and “Chicago” and “To a Contemporary Bunkshooter” caused quite a commotion. Carl originally called the latter poem “Billy Sunday,” and it denounced the ranting, raving, chair-breaking evangelist who “scared women and kids” in the name of “this Jesus.” The temptation to keep right on quoting is irresistible again!

History keeps repeating itself. When Billy Sunday finally was shown the poem—under the title of “To a Contemporary Bunkshooter,” of course—he immediately remarked that Carl Sandburg sounded like a “Red.” In thoughtful moments, there are those who wonder if God really is the motivating force behind an evangelist like Sandburg’s “Bunkshooter.”

Even though he gave some of his poems away to publications he considered worthwhile, Carl Sandburg was getting some poetry checks in 1914. “Chicago” brought him one hundred dollars from “Poetry Magazine,” and it also was awarded the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars. Later he would receive as much as one thousand dollars for poems pub-

lished in popular magazines with millions of subscribers.

The Chicago poems were published as a book by Henry Holt and Company in 1916. It caught the mood of a new era in which royal crowns would roll, and the little man in the street and the aproned peasant would dare to lift their voices as individuals.

In August of 1914, headlines screamed: ENGLAND DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY; KAISER HURLS TWO ARMIES INTO BELGIUM; 17,000,000 MEN ENGAGED IN WAR OF EIGHT NATIONS!

There was a strong "isolationist bloc" in Congress, and most of the Socialists thought that the United States would stay out of the European conflict.

After the United States entered the war in 1917, miners in Illinois were accused of sabotaging the war effort when they went on strike. Many I.W.W. leaders were arrested in Chicago for "Ten thousand crimes of sabotage aimed at hindering the war effort." Carl Sandburg went to the jail to interview William D. Haywood, an American labor leader who had begun working as a miner at the age of fifteen. Mr. Haywood explained that the strikes were not a sign of disloyalty. They were a protest against misery. There were no living cost controls during World War I, and food and clothing prices doubled and tripled—but wages didn't.

Mr. Haywood's motives sounded humane, but they kept getting him into trouble. He skipped bail on one of the disloyalty charges and went to Russia where he wrote a book and died in 1928. He never did get his hands on enough money and power for anybody to give him a set of Shakespeare.

Carl Sandburg would write the story of World War I as a patriot who loved his country and his hardworking fellow-citizens. When he refused to join Debs and Berger in objecting to American entry into the war, he may have been more farsighted than he knew. World War I shook up "the class struggle" all over the world. Self-indulgent monarchs who had been ruling by "divine right," rather than a high level of intelligence, got their thrones whisked out from under them. Never again would royalty rule supreme.

With tongue in cheek, Carl Sandburg has commented on the "buying" of titles. He lived in the days when wealthy American parents trotted their marriageable daughters off to Europe shopping for "transfusions of blue blood"—for a jigger of titled sap to add prestige to the family tree. If a young lady could afford to spell Lady with a capital "L," she could out-Lady any other filly in her social set.

Carl Sandburg, social commentator, had put his capitals where he thought they were most deserved—on the Hog Butcher, the Tool Maker, the Stacker of Wheat!

Chicago was listening to Carl Sandburg in high places and low places. Workers and union members would bring his Chicago poems to meetings and read them with a glow of new hope. Here was a poet who could put their ideas and ideals into language and catapult them far and wide!

Chicago was the center for a legendary group of newspaper "immortals," gathering in favorite "Bohemian" hang-outs of the day. Among them were Charles MacArthur, Ben Hecht, John Gunther, Sher-

wood Anderson, and Henry Luce. Sinclair Lewis would join them when he was in town. Carl Sandburg became one of them, his rich deep voice accentuating the spell-binding appeal of his remarks and opinions.

Sandburg's charm was not in the way he dressed. He wore working men's clothing—inexpensive, sturdy suits and shirts, and a cap pulled over his unruly hair. Tall and rangy, he was a man of deliberate movements. Sherwood Anderson's description of him is most apt: "When he enters a room, everyone knows a personage has arrived, but there is no swagger about him." He is still the same today, making no fuss about throwing his weight around—but all of a sudden he is from one place to another.

His honesty and sincerity drew people to this "human, intensely alive" man who had come from the people and could speak their language with the tongue of a righteously-indignant angel.

## Assignment: The People

It might be said that Chicago made Carl Sandburg, and Carl Sandburg made Chicago. He gave the Windy City an intellectual personality that other cities might well envy.

Because of his friendship with newspapermen like Chicago "Daily News" writer Ben Hecht, Carl was offered a job on the "Daily News" in 1917. As a boy, he had sold and read the Chicago paper. The unseen hero of his youth, Victor F. Lawson, was still editor. When Mr. Lawson gave him Eugene Field's old desk, Carl Sandburg's cup was filled to overflowing. This would mean more to him than being the highest-paid reporter on the staff, which he wasn't.

The twelve years directly ahead—as a reporter on the Chicago "Daily News" and a free lance writer—were amazingly prolific. He wrote labor stories, poetry, general features, editorials, and he even took over the motion picture column in 1918. He interviewed celebrities like Babe Ruth, who allowed as how he wasn't interested in Lincoln, Washington and Napoleon because, "I've never seen any of them."

In 1918, Carl Sandburg proved that he loved the country as much as the city. His second book of verse, "Cornhuskers," was published by Henry Holt and Company.

Most often quoted are these "theme" lines in "Cornhuskers":

"O prairie mother, I am one of your boys,  
I have loved the prairie as a man with a heart  
shot full of pain over love."

And here are lines for a sweaty he-man who has been pitching hay all day:

"After the sunburn of the day  
handling a pitchfork at a hayrack,  
after the eggs and biscuit and coffee,  
the pearl-gray haystacks  
in the gloaming are cool prayers  
to the harvest hands."

Sandburg brings Shakespeare right into the midst of the wide prairie with a whimsical observation:

"If I go bugs I want to do it like Ophelia.  
There was class in the way she went out of her head."

There are many remembrances of railroads sweeping across the prairies. There is also Huntington, the builder and owner of railroads, who "sleeps in a house six feet long."

Out of the cornucopia of "Cornhuskers" pours the headlight of the Limited Train, "potato blossoms in the summer night mist," washerwomen, harvest hands,

"the first spit of snow on the northwest wind," and many a muted, bleak cry out of the wilderness that is gone.

Carl Sandburg and Margaret Widdemer shared the Poetry Society Prize the year "Cornhuskers" was published. The Poetry Society prizes were later incorporated into the Pulitzer group.

His "Daily News" connections brought Carl Sandburg a foreign correspondent's assignment from the Newspaper Enterprise Association, and he spent a year in Sweden and Norway.

Contrary to Billy Sunday's observation, Carl Sandburg turned out to be a flop as a "Red," but it was not for want of an opportunity while he was abroad. Harry Golden tells the story in his biography, "Carl Sandburg." Carl didn't mind talking to Communists because they sometimes gave him good information for newspaper stories. He became acquainted with an active Communist agent who wanted him to smuggle a trunkful of propaganda material into the United States, to be used in subversive promotion. Carl readily agreed, but he had an entirely different destination in mind for the material. He wanted to present it to the University of Chicago for special study.

Carl was also supposed to act as a Communist courier for a ten thousand dollar check drawn on a New York bank. Deciding that the business was getting out of hand, Carl dropped the check and the rest of the problem into the lap of the U. S. Minister in Oslo. The Communists didn't try to "use" him again.

Carl Sandburg's major feature assignment on the Chicago "Daily News" started out as a routine, sober-

minded evaluation of race relations in the lusty, crowded city. It was written to alert the public to a University of Chicago survey revealing that infant mortality in the "Chicago Black Belt" was seven times greater than in a higher-privileged white neighborhood only a mile away. Starting about the middle of July, the series had been running for about two weeks.

The Black Belt population of more than 50,000 had doubled during World War I. Every lynching in the South sent thousands of Negroes north to seek equality, labor opportunities, and better schools. Half the Negro population of Madison County, Alabama—five thousand people—had come north in two years. Crowding themselves into already crowded tenements, they were absorbed into a labor market that needed unskilled workers in plants, businesses and domestic services during the war.

When the war was over, the returning Negro soldiers had to cram themselves back into Chicago's swarming Black Belt pattern as best they could. Carl Sandburg says, "The thousands of strong, intelligent young Negro men who were inducted into the army must have been asking, 'What are we ready to die for? Why do we live? What is democracy? What is the meaning of freedom, of self-determination?'"

Politically the Black Belt was strong, Carl Sandburg noted. At least the Negroes were able to vote as individuals. The colored people were showing initiative. There were Negro professional men. Negroes were running their own banks, stores, papers, magazines, and hospitals. All together, they were showing that they could set up as good a social, religious and po-

litical organization as their white neighbors could. Carl Sandburg noted that they liked Chicago and considered it "the most liberal all-around town in the country." If they couldn't make a success of their lives in Chicago, where could they do it?

But the Black Belt was bursting at the seams. It was a "ghetto," and opportunities to move out of it were fraught with hazards. "Blockbusting," the most nauseatingly unscrupulous business practice of our modern age, was practiced by a few unprincipled real estate men of both races. By various means, the owner of a house in a white neighborhood would be persuaded to sell to a Negro at a price that was exorbitant, but the real estate man would take care of the difference. This was only the first step. There would be the usual hue and cry about depreciation of real estate values; and the other white people would stampede to get out, selling their property at a loss. They wouldn't bother to ask themselves why, in the name of Heaven, the situation should work out that way. It is a form of brainwashing that probably is as old as Cain and Abel.

As the white people fled, taking a loss on their property, the real estate manipulator would jack up the prices on "the busted block" and sell them to Negroes at a heavy profit. Real estate values were all that counted, not human values.

Real estate conniving and unreasoning intolerance kept fueling the fires of resentment between the races, Carl Sandburg pointed out. In only one area was there a redeeming attitude. In the Chicago unions, the Negroes had the respect of their fellow members.

The Negroes, Carl Sandburg said frankly, had oft-

en come "sloppy and careless" from the South. White people should encourage them to build up their dignity and self-confidence. Booker T. Washington once pointed out that in some Southern states it was found that sixteen dollars per capita was being spent on the education of white children compared with one dollar and twenty-nine cents for Negro children—which, he considered, was presuming too much on the intelligence of the eager blacks.

For too many years, the average Negro has been stereotyped, and he has become used to it. If white people expect Negroes to be ignorant, sloppy, dishonest and violent, it's going to be that much harder for them to step across the abyss to the respectability of which they are capable.

Carl Sandburg in 1919 listed a number of things that Chicago owed to her colored citizens, including: Abandonment of attempted racial segregation, better improvements in repairs and upkeep of Negro neighborhoods, better schools for colored people, restraint against capitalizing on real estate deals, more playgrounds, recreational centers and branch libraries.

There was another side to the picture. Among the things that colored citizens owed to Chicago were: Better care of premises, thrift and economy in handling incomes, not running into debt buying expensive clothing and indulging themselves in amusements; working for civic benefits on every level possible, and not allowing themselves to be manipulated by "block-busters."

Carl Sandburg's series was running in the Chicago "Daily News," and the people of Chicago were ponder-

ing it. On the last Sunday of July, a colored boy at a Chicago beach swam across "an imaginary segregation line." When he climbed up on a raft, a group of white boys stoned him, pushed him into the water and stood watching him drown. Colored people asked the policeman on duty to arrest the boys who had thrown the stones, but he refused to take any responsibility. When the body of the boy was carried ashore, violence broke loose. The policeman stood aside while white and colored people hurled stones at each other.

Chicago was a city of hatred and terror for the next few days, with armed delinquent elements out roaming the streets in full force. Hysterical mob rule had taken the place of law and order. Twenty Negroes and fourteen white men were killed, and many Negro houses were set afire.

Carl Sandburg, labor reporter, pointed out that there were some islands of sanity. "Thousands of white men and thousands of colored men stood together as 'Labor Brothers' and refused to heap coals on the fires of bitterness." These were all Melting-Pot citizens. Sandburg wrote, "There is no Negro problem any more than there's an Irish problem, a Russian or a Polish or Jewish one. There is only a human problem after all."

Carl Sandburg thought that colored people should join unions for the sake of equal opportunity. Union membership lightens the "bitterness load" and forms a "brotherhood basis"—which, Sandburg, wrote, was a reason why unions had been later coming to the South. But it was in the North—in his own beloved Chicago—that Carl Sandburg came to the conclusion in 1919 that the racial problem should be of Federal

concern. So little progress was made on a state or local level, until the United States Supreme Court decision in 1954. Some advances were made during President Eisenhower's administration, but the greatest forward strides in the South are being made with the encouragement and determination of the Kennedy administration.

Carl Sandburg, in "The Chicago Race Riots," proposed "New industrial opportunities for Negroes: (1) the opening of doors to new occupations so that men will not have to stay in the common labor market all their lives; (2) getting men and women trained to perform skilled or unskilled labor and coaching them on a job so they will hold on; (3) creating a sentiment among employers so that no colored man or woman will be dismissed merely because of race."

Published as a booklet by Harcourt, Brace and Howe in 1919, the advice remains timely at this moment. Where there are prejudice and intolerance, progress crawls forward at a snail's pace. Still, you can stand in front of the noble, monumental Supreme Court building in Washington and look up at the words EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW—and feel as though they are coming closer to being realized than ever before.

In his "Collected Poems," Carl Sandburg refers to himself as a number of things, including "a wandering troubadour with a guitar." He had been tracking down folksongs during his lecture tours and had been sounding them out on a guitar to entertain his family. He always said he would have been a good musician if he'd gone to jail. He had managed to come a long way,

without formal training, since the days of the paper-wrapped comb and the twenty-five cent lessons on the old banjo.

One night, when he was reading his Chicago poems in front of an audience, he reached behind the lectern and picked up his guitar. Strumming away, he offered these delightful words of explanation:

"I will now sing a few folksongs that somehow tie into the folk quality I have tried to get into my verse. They are all authentic songs people have sung for years. If you don't care for them and want to leave the hall, it will be all right with me. I'll only be doing what I'd be doing if I were home, anyway."

They didn't desert him. Audiences all over the country have shown that they could listen all night, if he'd just keep on with those folk tunes. What did he sing that night, in his mellow baritone? Probably something like this:

"She promised she'd meet me  
As the clock struck seventeen  
At the stockyards just nine miles out of town;  
Where there's pigs' tails and pigs' ears,  
And tough old Texas steers  
Sell for sirloin steak at ninety cents a  
pound!"

The old folksongs, Sandburg believed, were part of the history of the country.

When Carl Sandburg became the editor of the motion picture column in the Chicago "Daily News," he worked out a "dream schedule" for himself. Starting on Sunday afternoon, he could see six or seven movies

in a couple of days, write his reviews, and have the rest of the week free to be a poet and a spinner of American fables.

In 1920 came "Smoke and Steel," and this time he shared the Poetry Society Prize with Stephen Vincent Benet. The dedication in "Smoke and Steel" is a beautifully-conceived tribute, from one creative artist to another: "To Col. Edward J. Steichen, painter of nocturnes and faces, camera engraver of glints and movements, listener to blue evening winds and new yellow roses, dreamer and finder, rider of great mornings in gardens, valleys, battles."

Here, in "Smoke and Steel," the reader finds the Mayor of Gary, in "cool cream pants . . . and white shoes, and a barber had fixed him up with a shampoo and a shave and he was easy and imperturbable. . . ."

"I asked the Mayor of Gary about the  
12-hour day and the 7-day week.

And the Mayor of Gary answered more  
workmen steal time on the job in Gary  
than any other place in the United States.

And I said good-by to the Mayor of  
Gary and I went from the  
city hall and turned the corner  
into Broadway. . . .

And I saw workmen wearing leather  
shoes scuffed with fire and cinders,  
and pitted with little holes from  
running molten steel. . . ."

In 1922, poem after vibrant poem, came "Slabs of

the Sunburnt West." When you read "Props," you know Carl hasn't forgotten those heartrending melodrammers at the old Opera House:

"The child goes out in the storm,  
stage thunder; 'erring daughter,  
never darken this doorsill again. . . .'  
she is out now, in the storm on the  
stage, out forever; snow, you son-of-a-gun,  
snow, turn on the snow."

Being swept along into every corner of the land, in and out of every imaginable experience, glimpsing views prismatic of the Family of Man as only a people-conscious, nature-conscious poet can see them—this is Sandburg's verse!

## Flummerywisters and ‘Flickers’

In 1922 and 1924, Carl Sandburg surprised everyone with some whimsical, colorful books about a fabled place called Rootabaga County. By that time, he and Paula Sandburg had three young daughters at their house—Margaret, Janet and Helga—and these were the sort of stories that charmed them most. No author has come closer to the ideal of “the perfect American fairy tale.”

As fresh and new today as they were in the early 1920’s, with original illustrations by the Petershams, they touch gently on the mysteries of life and tomfoolery and pathos, painted with magic color words that make everyone feel that this is a better world for children, and adults too, than it ever seemed before.

The word-lover, Carl Sandburg, dedicated the Rootabaga stories to “Spink” and “Skabooch,” his fun-time names for Margaret and Janet. Little curly-headed Helga was his “Swipes.”

“Rootabaga Stories” and “Rootabaga Pigeons” have been gathered into a single handsome volume for the newest generation of young people, because these

stories will endure. On the back of the jacket there is a letter from the eminent Frank Lloyd Wright, saying that he had gotten in the habit of reading the Rootabaga stories almost every night and would soon know them all by heart.

The trip to Rootabaga County should be an annual pilgrimage, if you want to keep your spirit young and buoyant. There is no journey to compare with this one, through the land where balloon pickers harvest balloons on stilts, through the country where circus clowns are baked in ovens and pumped alive with living red wind, over the zigzag railroad tracks and into the fabulous fable-land where the railroad tracks run off into the sky. This is Rootabaga County, and it takes a long slick yellow slab ticket, with a blue spanch across it, to get there.

In Rootabaga County, there are "flummerywisters!" "On a Friday morning when the flummerywisters are yodeling yisters high in the elm trees," the Potato Face Blind Man, who lives in the Village of Liver-and-Onions in Rootabaga County, just knows this is going to be "a good and lucky day."

Some of the Rootabaga County philosophy hits pretty close to home. There is a social moral in the place where the fellow is going to be hanged to the gallows "because he sneezed in the wrong place before the wrong people."

The eternal philosopher, the wise Potato Face Blind Man, sits in the heart of Rootabaga County with his accordion. When he peers over the top of his black spectacles and tells Blixie Bimber, "Tomorrow will never catch up with yesterday because yesterday start-

ed sooner," you catch a glimpse of Carl Sandburg's twinkling eyes. That's why you ask him, "Do you identify yourself with the Potato Face Blind Man?"

When he admits, "Yes, I do," you tell him you thought you saw him hiding behind those spectacles all the time, with an accordion instead of a guitar. Carl Sandburg's depth of understanding of searching young hearts is most apparent in his modern "American fairy tales."

So Carl Sandburg was a motion picture reviewer for the Chicago "Daily News," you tell yourself. Maybe it would be fun to look into that. You take the elevator down into the bowels of the great Library of Congress building, saunter through the long gray tunnel with its conspicuous Air Raid Shelter signs, and you are in the Annex. On the fifth floor, scholars and students of various ages are sitting in deep concentration before a multitude of "microreaders."

You pick a year—1925 would be a nice "neutral" year—and the page fetches you some microfilm from the old Chicago "Daily News." Seated in front of your own private microreading machine, you are soon as engrossed as anyone else. Your forehead almost shoving against the upper window frame of the machine, you lean forward over the "life-size" pages, as the marvelous contraption lights up a bygone era.

Here, in the issue for January 2, 1925, is one of Eugene Field's poems. But you know that Carl Sandburg inherited Eugene Field's old desk! Of course, it's a reprint from the "Sharps and Flats" Column of July 24, 1895. The jolly rhyme of "The Bow-Leg Boy" catches you up:

“Who should come up the road one day  
But the doctor-man in his two-wheel shay;  
And he whoad his horse and he cried ‘Ahoy,  
I have brought you folks a bow-leg boy. . . .’”

On the editorial page, there is another familiar name: Victor Lawson, Editor and Publisher.

There are Thornton Burgess’ “Bedtime Stories,” carrying a flood of memories with them.

Then, in a box in the upper lefthand corner of a page, you see the words MOTION PICTURES. Below is a by-line, “By Carl Sandburg.” You get a strange feeling of being swept up and swirled backward into the earlier life of the man whose activities fascinate you. What picture is he reviewing on January 2, 1925? “The Peter Pan picture, having its first run at McVickers’ theater this week, is one of those exceptional photoplays where as the reels go by you can tell that those who made it sort of lived with it quite awhile before they began working on it, and they kept on loving the picture right up to the last flicker.”

The production, starring Betty Bronson, with Ernest Torrence as Captain Hook, was one “which this reviewer hopes to see two or three times.”

“Darkened Windows,” by Cornelia Kane Rathbone — “An Intriguing Story of Love and Mystery”—was being serialized in large daily chunks, in those January, 1925, issues. There were some zany columns, by Nina Wilcox Putnam, about foreign travel and the Florida real estate boom. Harry Hansen, one of the reviewers on the book page, was to become a Sandburg biographer.

And what was Carl Sandburg up to? He must have figured that there should be a certain amount of depth to these reviews. On January 5, he suggested that Tom Mix might be trying to capture the attention of lady motion picture fans. "We have the feeling about a few of the Tom Mix pictures lately that he is slicked up too much. . . ."

On January 6, 1925, on the same page with the review about D. W. Griffith's "Isn't Life Wonderful?" there is a Roosevelt Theater advertisement for a Remarkable Romantic Drama, "Abraham Lincoln." Sandburg reviews the motion picture with loving appreciation for the subject matter.

Advertising "angles" were about on par with those of today. The "Abraham Lincoln" film was billed in another advertisement as THE GREAT STORY OF A GREAT LOVE THAT RULED A GREAT LIFE! Emphasis was strong on the Ann Rutledge episode.

Here, in the Chicago Daily News for 1925, are glamorous names from another era—Poli Negri in "East of Suez," and Douglas Fairbanks, Senior, in "The Thief of Bagdad."

The boys on "The News" must have had some moments of good clean fun that were worth recording. Here is one, under a January 15th dateline: Vachel Lindsay's poem, "The Curse of the Saxophone," started a controversy about the merits of the saxophone. Evidence and counter-evidence were introduced. The sub-head on the story, "Wales Known to Have Shaken Hands with Vancouver Saxophone Player," was supposed to be the prime piece of evidence in favor of the saxophone. That led to a debate on whether the Prince

of Wales played a saxophone and a zither, or just a zither.

Carl Sandburg's opinion was solicited, according to the story. "Carl Sandburg, who generally plays a sort of mandolin, took a definite stand with the cons in the great crusade. 'Give me a good old banjo and a better word than Omaha to rhyme with ostermoor, and all the saxophones in the world can go jump in the lake. Brother Lindsay is right.' " Carl was sticking with stringed instruments, even if the Prince of Wales—the present Duke of Windsor—might be a saxophone player!

On the pages of the Chicago "Daily News," during the Middle Roaring Twenties, you were likely to see the cupid's bow mouth and fluffy blonde hair of Mae Murray, the soulful eyes of Lillian Gish, the sweet American Girl features of Mary Pickford.

Those were the days when the weekly matinee was an institution for youngsters. While you were washing the lunch dishes on Saturday, the strain would become progressively unbearable as nickel matinee time neared. Whether it was Tom Mix or Ken Maynard or Hoot Gibson, you felt as though you would just DIE if your mother had planned some extra chores at home for the whole afternoon—especially if there happened to be a "serial" running too, with the heroine being left suspended, from last Saturday, halfway across that high trestle above the swirling rapids, with the steam locomotive bearing down on her from one end of the track and the villain, always with a mustache, waiting at the other end. With the depression came

realism, ending an age of ecstatic, melodramatic nickel matinees.

You look at the ads in the Chicago "Daily News" for 1925 and see the boyish female silhouette, with beltlines four inches above the knees.

Those were the days when people would take a dose of epsom salts if they needed it, and it would have about the same effect as unclogging the sink with Drano.

Stories about the fluctuating fortunes of European royalty were still hot news, warmed over from World War I. Monarchs who had managed to cling to their wobbly thrones were treated with romantic, Graustarkian tenderness. "Graustark" was a charming novel that ladies used to read while they nibbled chocolates. You'd need to have a strong stomach to eat chocolates while you read some of the modern best-sellers.

## The Background of a “Social Aggravator”

Honest toil and plenty of it, Carl Sandburg has always maintained, is good for people. It teaches them self-discipline and self-control. He has no more patience with the deliberately idle poor than with the idle rich. “Hard work never hurt anybody,” he says, speaking as a boy and a man of experience.

On the other hand, he believes that human beings should not be overworked to the point of exhaustion and underpaid to the point of malnutrition. Carl Sandburg’s poetry contains a definition for poverty. “Poverty is when you work hard, live cheap and can’t pay up. . . .” He believes people should have some of the good things of life and time to enjoy them.

Carl Sandburg was born into an era of exploitation of “the common man,” especially the immigrant who had set out from the old, crowded countries of Europe with such high hopes. Young children still were working in coal mines and sweatshops in some states, when Carl was old enough to read. By “apprenticing out” orphans and children from large families, public charities were relieved of responsibility to them. Even

churches gave their approval, believing that Satan makes work for idle hands—and there may be some truth in that, when modern juvenile delinquency figures are contemplated. More education, vocational training and decent jobs—not sweatshops—will continue to be needed.

The world can see, by looking at the United States, that workers who are well-paid, healthy, and confident of their futures, can spur the economic development of a country as their buying power increases. In spite of the prophets of doom, the rich get richer, and most of the poor have gotten richer too. There are always those “pockets of misery and discrimination” to jab at our consciences, to make us aware that there is still work to be done; but now they are the exception, rather than the normal state of affairs that they used to be.

A Republican at the age of six, Carl Sandburg grew up studying the issues of all the political parties, relating them to the condition of the working people around him. These were his people, the people he loved; and their sufferings were his sufferings. Contemplating the faces of the weary and downtrodden, their imaginations often stifled to the point of resignation, Carl Sandburg realized that the “desperate hopers” needed voices to speak for them. He could see behind the masks:

“The shrouding of obedience to immediate necessity,

The mask of ‘What do I care’ to cover ‘What else can I do?’ ”

The country showed signs of becoming immensely

wealthy on the fruits of the people's toil, and there were "agitators" who thought the workers were part of the country and deserved a fair share.

Agitators? Carl Sandburg's interest in Abraham Lincoln would lead him to read paragraphs that would make Lincoln sound like a "labor agitator" too. In his First Annual Message to Congress, Abraham Lincoln, the pride of the Republican party, and a handy fellow at splitting rails by the sweat of his brow, said,

"Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could not have existed if labor had not existed first."

The following quotation, printed in the Washington Chronicle on December 7, 1864, needs a closer examination to get all the "meat" out of it:

"The religion that sets men to rebel and fight against their Government, because, as they think, that Government does not sufficiently help some men to eat their bread in the sweat of other men's faces, is not the sort of religion upon which people can get to heaven."

Among Lincoln's wealth of opinions on the subject of labor, just this one more:

"As I would not be a slave, so would I not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

In neither of the major political parties, early in this century, could Carl Sandburg find much of that kind of spirit on the subject of labor. He felt most at home in the Social-Democratic Party, among people

who insisted that—here in this vital, prospering country—every working person should have a fairly decent standard of living.

Carl Sandburg reported many of the early stories of the labor struggle. He shared the suspense, as he saw the daring strike of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union spreading across the country.

About the time the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union was formed, garment workers were getting in the neighborhood of five dollars for a monotonous eighty-hour work week. In 1909, some of the ladies in New York decided that this was no way to treat ladies, and a respectable number of their fellow-sufferers agreed with them. In fact, the "Uprising of the Twenty Thousand" made a distinct impression on the employers who saw them marching out of the sweatshops, taking their needles and thread with them. A fifty-two-hour work week and a raise in wages brought them back, satisfied that they had driven a sharp wedge into the backbone of sweatshop exploitation.

As has been noted in the Chicago race riots series, Sandburg's appraisals were well-balanced. He didn't rant and rave and tear his hair and scream, "Pity the poor and underprivileged!" Probably that's why he still has such a fine head of hair.

Carl Sandburg looked at both sides of the problem. All poor people and members of minority groups weren't saints. All rich men weren't selfish, heartless tyrants. There could be a measure of understanding and generosity, of greediness and viciousness, on both sides of the fence. In the Bible, he knows, there is the

parable about the master who forgave his servant his debt, only to learn that the servant had gone out and throttled a man who was in debt to him.

Carl Sandburg could admire a man whose wealth represented "a keen dispersal for science, music and research." There is a gentle salute for George Eastman's integrity in the words:

"His last testament stands secure  
against the childishness of second childhood."

"The Poet of the People" does not see happiness in wealth. He has noticed that money can buy power for proud men, but he saw more genuine happiness in a "crowd of Hungarians under the trees with their women and children and a keg of beer and an accordion." He saw the glow of honest pride in the face of a violin-maker putting the finishing touches on a fine instrument.

There is no envy in Carl Sandburg's occasional disillusionment with the man who wants one million, then another million, then a hundred million dollars. Why should there be, for a man of Carl Sandburg's tastes? Big businessmen can hire people to do almost everything in the world for them—except read books. Carl Sandburg is happy with his books. The stock market may jump up and down like a pogo stick, but it cannot affect his treasures!

Carl Sandburg and his fellow labor reformers saw large portions of struggling workers gradually reaping benefits in shorter work weeks and higher salaries. In the 1920's, laborers, clerks and stenographers often earned twenty-five cents an hour. Their bosses might

even give them a crisp dollar bill for Christmas, a half-day's salary! A dollar went much farther in those days.

A few companies tried to finance unemployment insurance, but they found the load too heavy. Even as late as 1932, Wisconsin was the only state with a workable unemployment insurance program.

If a worker was sick for any period of time, or got laid off, his salary would stop. There were no unemployment checks in the 1920's. If the average worker could sock away a penny here and a dime there, as Carl Sandburg's father had tried to do, this would be his measure of security in his old age. There was no Social Security. Pension plans were rare. Common laborers with families couldn't afford to be sick, and it was cheaper to pull a tooth than go to the dentist.

But there was peace and a general air of prosperity in the later twenties. It was built on many things, including a healthy economy that became inflated all out of proportion by the greed of people who thought they could get rich in the stock market.

When the "temple of greed" collapsed overnight, the Depression set in—and the hot winds of the Dust Bowl conspired to make life even more miserable for the worker and farmer.

In "The People, Yes," there are some lines about men who appear at the right moment on the stage of history:

"Yet the strong man, the priceless one who wants  
nothing for himself and has his roots among  
the people,

Comes often enough for the people to know him

and win through into gains beyond later losing. . . .”

Because he leads into some stanzas about Lincoln, Sandburg's mind undoubtedly was centered on his cherished “Father Abraham.” The reader is likely to feel that the cloak also fits the shoulders of Carl Sandburg—a “strong man” in a later generation.

The Depression-jinxed American people were running short on hope in the days of our modern Hard Times—selling apples on corners if they had apples to sell, generally just tramping the city streets, with pieces of cardboard to keep the skin of their soles off the cement, looking for jobs that just weren't there. Then came another of Carl Sandburg's “strong men”—for the White House and the people. Carl Sandburg speaks of Franklin D. Roosevelt as “standing like Samuel between the old and the new.” Even though Norman Thomas kept running for President on the Socialist ticket, right into the 1940's, the thunder was fading away. The conventions, heard on the radio, were becoming more relaxed and jovial, with so little at stake any more.

Arguments about the Depression have filled many books. There was actually a question of whether or not the capitalist system would survive the crash of 1929. When Franklin Roosevelt became the Man of the People, he stirred up a savory pot of “alphabet soup” for hungry millions who had almost forgotten how to hope—who would cringe before almost anyone for two bits. Perhaps it was “artificial prosperity,” but it would be an impossible struggle to take some of the New Deal

gains away from the American worker, whether he votes for the Donkey or the Elephant.

Business and labor emerged from the New Deal program with vitality and headed into a new era of prosperity such as the world has never seen—taking a World War in their stride. If it's any satisfaction, we are the envy of the world. The world did not envy us our sweatshops and poorhouses.

The worker no longer suffers as many headaches —wondering if his hard-earned savings will be wiped out overnight by a long illness in the family, an accident, a funeral, an unwise investment, with nothing left at the end of a lifetime of toil. Years ago, when people went past the county "poor farm," it was a common practice for someone to blurt out, "Send my mail there when I get too old to work!"

When I get too old to work! When a citizen of a democracy has worked hard and lived decently all his life, when he has made his sincere contribution to economic progress, Carl Sandburg believes he deserves a small measure of security in his old age.

Industry knows that workers perform better when their anxieties are fewer. Shorter hours—paid vacations — pension and medical plans — extra benefits; these are included in the advertisements that industry puts out. In these days of complicated, expensive machinery, the best investment a company can make is in the employment of workers who can keep their minds on the job—instead of worrying that they won't be able to educate their children and might end up "at the poor farm" themselves. There are few social gains

of the American type in the "feudal areas" of the world—look at them!

It is little wonder that Carl Sandburg was offered a "respectable" job in private industry. This man not only knows Lincoln—he knows labor and industry and the people concerned with it!

Carl Sandburg knows the people at work, the big fellows and the little fellows, the hypocrites and the dutiful, the good workers who pull their own weight and the loafers who drag their feet. He has seen them in their moments of laughter and their days of need, and you can read Sandburg and find out just about everything worth knowing about the metamorphosis of labor-and-industrial relations for most of this century. Sandburg gets right into the factory and the workshop:

"...the slow learning of what makes a good workman and the comfort of handling good tools, the joy of working with the night crew and a foreman who is 'one of us,' a foreman who understands . . .

"The grades and lines of workmen, how one takes care and puts the job through with the least number of motions and another is careless and never sure what he is doing and another is careful and means well but the gang knows he belongs somewhere else and another is a slouch for work but they are glad to have him for his jokes and clowning."

Sandburg has written downright sentimental salutes to majestic skyscrapers, smokestacks, architectural marvels of all kinds. It has been said that these "castles" are owned by people who do not share his

political philosophy, so how can a "Poet of the People" rhapsodize about them? Because they have been built by the people—the man at the steam shovel, the brick-layer, the riveter, the painter. Sandburg cautions against "the lurking treachery of machinery," but he sees glory in the skyline silhouettes that the workers, the little men—multiplied by millions—have made to the progress of the nation. He often asks his readers to consider what would happen "without the daily chores of the people," and you visualize great cities unbuilt, great cities standing still, great cities un-nourished.

English teachers often say that "great" is an over-worked adjective. If they will take a close look at The Gettysburg address, they will notice that Abraham Lincoln thought it a good enough word to use twice in those few short paragraphs. Of course, he was never an English teacher.

Perhaps this chapter should be considered a basic introduction to Chapter XVI. All the quotations are taken from "The People, Yes," the people "on the march" as Sandburg has seen them—sometimes stumbling two steps backward for each three forward, but moving, always moving "through into gains beyond later losing." You see the fruits of their labor pouring out of factory and farm, and you are glad that they can work proudly, produce abundantly, and enjoy a standard of living that would have made their grandfathers' eyes pop!

The grandchildren and great-grandchildren of "the common man" have come a long way in Carl Sandburg's lifetime—from the "carryin'-in boys" at the

glass factory and twelve-year-olds working in coal mines, to young Americans lying around watching TV while they neglect their homework!

### Carl Sandburg's Mr. Lincoln

When Carl Sandburg decided to do something about his "alter ego"—that long-shanked fellow in the tall hat who always seemed to be lurking somewhere in his mind—the Sandburgs were living in Elmhurst, a suburb of Chicago. The countryside was rural, and there was even a barn on the property.

On many of his lecture and folk-singing tours, Carl Sandburg had been gathering Lincoln material. He had haunted old bookstores and historical libraries. He had located old-timers who had known Abraham Lincoln, and people-who-knew-people who had known Abraham Lincoln, and people who had precious Lincoln letters stored away among their souvenirs.

When a lecturer has a speaking date ahead of him, he will usually try to conserve his energy. After spending arduous hours on Lincoln research all day, Carl Sandburg still was able to sparkle brightly for his audiences at night. He seemed to gather strength and enthusiasm from his growing familiarity with the life and works of his hero. He would be ready to sing and speak with zest to all those American faces looking up

at him, boys and girls and grownups—Abraham Lincoln's people, Carl Sandburg's people.

The Lincoln material kept piling up in the Sandburg house, and Carl resolved to do something about it. There were so few books for young people that actually told the true story of Abraham Lincoln. Most of them portrayed him as a sugar-coated, sentimental figure, in the same category with George Washington and that eternal cherry tree. It was about time that the young people of the nation should feel a close, intimate contact with the flesh-and-blood Lincoln boy who suffered true pioneer hardships with his family when they moved from Kentucky to Illinois by oxcart, who lost his mother early in his youth, who knew how it felt to work himself hard—and still be able to look at the sliver of moon over the cold, bare prairie and dream searching dreams.

Young people, Carl Sandburg believed, were hearing "too many preachers, sycophants, politicians, ignoramuses talking about Lincoln in a way to make you writhe." The Civil War President was being lost to the youth of the nation.

Those first chapters eventually did become a book especially for young people, but Carl Sandburg's eyes kept dwelling on the accumulating stacks of Lincolniana, and his mind would not rest easy. He was beginning to realize that there were also very few books about Lincoln for people of any age. There were some biographies, too formalized or lacking in reliable information. There were biased and prejudiced feature stories—some ridiculously laudatory, some unmercifully vicious; and there were some honest appraisals

too. Unless they were all brought together, with Abraham Lincoln and his words and actions at their center, how could Abraham Lincoln be portrayed authentically for generations of Americans who had never seen and heard him?

After he had his movie reviews—about Mary Pickford and Tom Mix and Betty Bronson and Lillian Gish—finished for the week, Carl Sandburg became a scholarly, methodical researcher. Just the arranging of all those biographical scraps in proper sequence must have been a colossal undertaking. Carl Sandburg's love for Lincoln, his constant interest in Honest Abe's words and reactions, gave him impetus and inspiration.

Carl Sandburg's young life had not been easy. Neither had Abraham Lincoln's. Their understanding of the common man was a mutual quality. Each, in his own lifetime, would think of himself as a common man, a struggler from among the little people. Carl Sandburg has put it this way: "There's a certain level of human existence below which one must sometime have lived if one is really to know the ways of the masses."

The 344,000-word manuscript of "Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years" took Honest Abe through his early life in Kentucky and Indiana, his terms in the Illinois Legislature, his two years as a Congressman in Washington, and his return to Illinois. Carl Sandburg must have taken personal delight in including this item about the 1840-41 session of the Illinois Legislature: "Lincoln joined with Whigs and Democrats and by 70 to 11 votes killed a bill to give the Territory

of Wisconsin the 14 northern counties in Illinois. Thus Illinois kept in its border the vital and growing Great Lakes port of Chicago. The bright little prairie town of Galesburg in Knox County won incorporation by 52 to 31, Lincoln voting Aye."

"Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years" was published in two large, distinguished volumes by Harcourt, Brace and Company, in 1926.

Carl Sandburg's mother died on December 30th of that same year. Her children would remember her as a lady of endearing young and endearing older charms, with always her little joke and probably a Swedish twist to the words, and the Swedish accent and mispronunciations so precious to remember because they are heard so seldom any more. The long days of scrubbing and cooking and toiling over a washboard for a large family could not dim the radiance of her faith in God or her belief that "there are so many interesting things in life." She spoke of learning and knowing. She was a thinker whose mind did not stay at home, hemmed in by walls and floors. A philosopher with a sense of humor like her son's, she wrote to one of her daughters about a fierce storm. Smack in the middle of an account of the damage done, we find these words, ". . . the people are stormy everywhere, too, so what can we do?"

What Carl Sandburg wrote about Nancy Hanks Lincoln might well apply to his own mother: "Every day came cooking, keeping the fire going, scrubbing, washing, patching, with little time to think of the glory she believed in—always yonder."

In "Souvenir," a psalm of meditation which she

wrote during her last lingering illness, there are thoughts that show the greatness of her mind. She spoke of "the gem called Patience," she spoke of learning to "sacrifice, and overcome selfishness," and of "the larger wisdom that can see the use of earthly pain and sorrow." She knew that her life had not been a gay round of jolly moments when she rose to the finest heights of all with these words, "Lift me up high above those low and simple, ugly black waves that only torment, chafe upon the spirit and troubled mind."

By 1927 Carl had collected so many folksongs on his travels that Harcourt, Brace published them under the title, "The American Songbag." In the Foreword, Carl Sandburg makes some entrancing observations on the difficulties of pinning down regional dialects. He also explains that "The American Songbag" is "a rag bag of strips, stripes and streaks of color from nearly all ends of the earth." They run the gamut: ballads, "tarnished love" tales, remembrances of the Ould Sod, pioneer and hillbilly tunes, sea chanties and spirituals. A few of the songs are downright tear-jerkers, but they also have their place in the history of the country.

You can almost hear Carl Sandburg strumming his "gittar," swinging into "California," a song of the gold rush days:

"We'll expect our share of the coarsest fare  
And sometimes sleep in the open air,  
On the cold damp ground we'll all sleep sound  
Except when the wolves go howling round."

"The Erie Canal" marks another historical milestone; here is a word-picture of a bygone era:

"I've got a mule and her name is Sal,  
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal.  
She's a good old worker and a good old pal,  
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal."

Carl Sandburg had given a brimming portion of Lincoln's life to the people of the country. Now he was making certain that their songs were preserved for posterity. He had taken no vocal lessons, but he had sung with the Lombard College Glee Club and the Berrien Street Barbershop harmonizers, and he was not timid about opening his mouth and letting his joy of living pour out in song.

In 1928, with the serial rights to "The Prairie Years" sold to "The Pictorial Review" and the book royalties coming in, Carl and Paula Sandburg began to look around for a quiet country home that would be "self-sustaining." Carl remembered the Hard Times years at home, when the potato crop in the backyard had been the salvation of the Sandburgs' stomachs. In 1928, Carl and Mrs. Sandburg and their three daughters moved to the sand dune country at Harbert, Michigan—just around the southern tip of Lake Michigan from Chicago, where they had vacationed during several summers. Here they built a "winterized" house and Carl made plans "to be independent like a farmer."

All of the Lincoln research material was moved to the new house, where it probably took up more space than the members of the family. Generous contributors kept sending new batches of Lincolniana that had come to light, and it all had to be examined carefully and acknowledged. Looking the situation over, Carl Sand-

burg knew that he had only begun to write the Lincoln story.

In that year of 1928, another poetic salute to the people of the country he loved was published. "Good Morning, America," is introduced with thirty-eight definitions of poetry, all of them provocative. Number six has flashes of lightning: "Poetry is a puppet-show, where riders of skyrockets and divers of sea-fathoms gossip about the sixth sense and the fourth dimension." Number thirty-eight is meticulous: "Poetry is the capture of a picture, a song, or a flair, in a deliberate prism of words."

In the "Sky Pieces" section of this fifth collection of Sandburg poems, the poet matches people to their headgear and admonishes:

"Hats are skypieces; hats have a destiny;  
    wish your hat slowly; your hat is you."

The title poem in "Good Morning, America," was chosen the Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard in 1928.

Carl Sandburg, the writer, was now being written about. Bruce Weirick, of the English Department at the University of Illinois, published "From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry" in 1928.

It has already been noted that Mrs. Carl Sandburg's maiden name was Steichen, a name to ring a bell all by itself. Carl Sandburg's brother-in-law is the internationally famous photographer, an artist with a camera.

In discussing artistic expression in the Preface to his "Complete Poems," Carl Sandburg says of Edward Steichen, "Steichen after World War I put in a year

making a thousand photographs of a white cup and saucer, a quest in light and shadow."

Edward Steichen has had a long and productive life since those World War I years. Leafing through the Saturday Review for May 20, 1961, we read about another of the many Steichen exhibitions. On view are "those six composite profiles of Sandburg's eloquent face."

Carl Sandburg's admiration for Edward Steichen's talent burst forth, in 1929, in the form of the first biography of a photographer ever to be written. Theirs would continue to be a relationship of mutual esteem, with the highest point yet to be reached.

When the Sandburgs moved to the home at Harbert, Michigan, the youngest daughter, Helga, yearned to be a farmer with a cow in the barn. Her father told her that a herd of goats might be better. Perhaps he was thinking fondly of a story about "goats in the White House." He must have chuckled over one of young Tad Lincoln's rip-roaring exploits:

"A party of Boston ladies admired the velvet carpet, plush upholstery, mahogany furniture and pompous chandeliers of the East Room. The air was quiet, dignified. Then a slam-bang racket, a shrill voice, 'Look out there!'—and young Tad came through flourishing a long whip, driving two goats hitched tandem to a kitchen chair. These goats figured in telegrams to Mrs. Lincoln, away with Tad on a visit: 'Tell Tad the goats and father are very well, especially the goats. . . .'"

The "self-sustaining Sandburgs" went into the goat business, with Mrs. Sandburg taking over the major

responsibilities through the years. She has become a champion goat breeder of a fine herd, and she is an active officer in the American Goat Record Association. Who will ever forget that wonderful color picture of Carl Sandburg, cradling a young goat in his arms, on the cover of "Friends Magazine" for August, 1960! Carl loves those goats.

During the 1920's, many adults had shared the delight of their children in the "Rootabaga Stories." In 1930, Harcourt, Brace published ninety-six pages of Rootabaga whimsy for people who forgot to grow old. In the "Rootabaga Stories for Adults" is this invitation to stay young without bothering with wrinkle creams:

"He (Potato Face) knows . . . that men and women old in years sometimes keep a fresh child heart and, to the last, salute the dawn and the morning with a measure of reverence and laughter."

During these years, Sandburg was getting deeply involved in the remaining stacks of Lincoln material. Either he felt the need to bite off a chunk from the edges as part of his "training table diet," or else he thought it would add to the Lincoln perspective if he tackled Mrs. Lincoln first. In 1932, "Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow," was published. Sandburg collaborated in the writing of this volume with Paul M. Angle, the Illinois historian and Lincoln authority, whom Carl describes as "a hardened veteran in the Lincoln field."

In Part I, Carl Sandburg tells the story of the Lincoln marriage and Mrs. Lincoln's life after the assassination. Mr. Angle, in Part II, provided documents and letters to substantiate the material in Part I. Some re-

viewers called the book "a notable addition to Lincolniana" and said, "high art and sound learning, not usual in dealing with the Lincolns, are combined to give one of the best books in this field."

One reviewer suggested that Carl Sandburg might have wished he had been writing about Ann Rutledge instead. That is entirely possible, because there is some evidence to show that Mary Todd Lincoln had her difficult moments, and Carl Sandburg would worry about petty domestic anxieties being added to the burdens of the care-ridden Civil War President. Still, Sandburg shows quite clearly that Abraham Lincoln had infinite patience with his restless, neurotic little wife, patting her hand and calling her "Mother" with humor and affection in moments of strain; and there is the feeling that other Lincoln admirers should be no less generous.

## A Patriot Writes

“Abraham Lincoln: The War Years.” Those words, to a Sandburg biographer, have the beat of feet marching on hallowed ground.

The Lincoln biography is Carl Sandburg’s massive monument to the country he loves. There is nothing comparable in the literature of this nation. Carl Sandburg was giving Abraham Lincoln to the people of the world, in a way that the Great Emancipator had never been portrayed before. It was a full-scale portrait of the man, his words, his reactions, his great and generous heart, his love of a good joke. It would be a completely honest appraisal. Carl Sandburg would not explain the man or try to analyze him. He would let Lincoln speak for himself.

In “The People, Yes,” which was still to come, are the words, “Step by step one goes far.” Step by step, detail by detail, sentence by sentence, page by page. That is the way an author must write one book, three books, six books. A word at a time, never slighting a detail that might add a certain richness to the narrative,

Sandburg's mind was so crammed with his Lincoln project that there was room for only one other thought—that the Lord should spare him until he finished this great labor born of his sense of dedication. Working on a cracker box—Carl Sandburg knew that General Grant had directed his campaign from a cracker box, and that was good enough for him—the Lincoln biographer would try to ignore the pangs of brain-weariness that would strike him late at night. The “spark gap and the pounding hammer,” too often depicted on TV commercials for headache pills, felt very real during some of those grueling sessions. He did not falter. He did not shove out large chunks of pertinent material and say, “I’ll cut ‘The War Years’ down to three volumes, two volumes.” He wanted to keep faith with the Whole Lincoln, with the American people, and with his own personal ideals.

This was the man who had cried, “Lay me on an anvil, O God . . . Let me lift and loosen old foundations.” Here he was, the human crowbar, lifting and loosening old foundations, with all the mighty strength of his body and brain.

This was the man who had grown up with an awareness of self-discipline. The sweat of the harvest fields, the chill through thin shoes on the milk and paper routes, the muscle-grinding effort of grappling chunks of ice as heavy as he was—these had strengthened his body. The reading he had done, voluntarily and hungrily, and all the studying of people and their problems, and all the sad and glorious moments of imagining—these had strengthened his mind.

Sandburg was helping Lincoln to carry the un-

wieldy weight of an embattled North and South on his shoulders, to juggle a Congress that was just as contrary as some of our modern ones. Does a man go to his sleep relaxed when he rises from that cracker box, with a stabbing ache in the middle of his back and a stiffness in his neck, after sixteen or eighteen hours of writing and mind-churning concentration? Or does he lie in bed wondering if he should move that one paragraph over to the next page? And is all of the material about one of the characters authentic? And shouldn't there be more information to clarify Lincoln's action on this and that proposal?

Carl Sandburg was still collecting material, and he was financing the Lincoln project with lectures and "wandering minstrel" tours during the winter months. He continued searching around the country for Lincolniana in libraries and bookstores, in dusty stacks of old newspapers, in collections of yellowed letters and notes. He sought out anyone who had news of his old "friend," the companion of his life-long meditations, Abraham Lincoln.

During the hard-writing months, Carl Sandburg had two copyists working on the research material, and Mrs. Sandburg and the girls assisted with the files and miscellaneous chores. In his dedications and acknowledgements, the poet and Lincoln biographer has shown his abiding awareness of the part that his family has played in helping him to meet his super-human challenges.

Housekeeping must have been a bit complicated, with the attic and a second floor room overflowing with books. Reference materials and books were moved

to the barn as soon as Carl had extracted what he needed, but the fresh deluges kept pouring into the house.

From "Sandburg Range," published later, came these timely observations: "Inevitably Sandburg became a Lincoln collector as well as a scholar. Memorabilia, reminiscences, pictures, medals, programs, printed speeches, flowed in his direction. His correspondence with 'Lincoln-helpers' would have added up to another six volumes."

Anyone who has written a one-volume biography—or a lengthy term paper about a famous person—knows that the material can sometimes get out of hand. Carl Sandburg's genius as a journalist, an efficient organizer, is most apparent in the Lincoln biography. All material is related to the central figure, even when it is roaming far afield—as in the case of Sherman's march through Georgia. This is consistently the story of the Great Who, with all the lesser "who's, what's, why's and how's," revolving around him. Always there is an awareness of Lincoln's two unflagging purposes—to save the Union and free the slaves.

For years we have read that Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was scribbled out on the train, at the last minute. It was not. Carl Sandburg gives all the background details, taking the reader on that memorable pilgrimage with the President and his party.

"Fourscore and seven years ago—" Abraham Lincoln began to speak, in Soldiers' Cemetery, on November 19, 1863. Universal Standard Encyclopedia says of that speech: ". . . today the Gettysburg Address is universally recognized not only as a classic model of the

noblest kind of oratory, but also as one of the most moving expressions of the democratic spirit ever uttered." Carl Sandburg admires the man in the White House today. "Lincolnesque" was Sandburg's mischievous comment on the 1960 Inaugural Address, speaking before a rock-ribbed Republican group. Lincoln, who loved to read books, including the Bible, probably would have been fond of the book-reading people in the White House today. He would have taken a dim view of the far-Rightist who said he could name six books that contained Communist propaganda—but he hadn't READ any of them.

There is a certain hatred and scorn in some political areas today, and humor too often comes out sneering. There were "studied croakers" in Lincoln's day too. Gurowski, probably one of the few men Lincoln didn't trust, came out with phrases like, "The country is marching to its tomb, but the grave-diggers will not confess their crime." Lincoln, war-torn and war-tossed by his enemies and critics, was still able to say: "I shall do nothing in malice. What I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing." Reading Lincoln, you know he would have loved Art Buchwald, "Herblock" and Bill Mauldin. He would have taken delight in the mellifluous eloquence, and the sagacity of a Republican statesman like Senator Everett Dirksen from his home state. The "haters" were the ones who made Lincoln uneasy.

In Sandburg's "Abraham Lincoln" there is rich evidence of Lincoln's lack of malice. He genuinely admired General Robert E. Lee, and he hoped that Jefferson Davis would escape from the country before

some of the northern "haters" could get their hands on him. He did not hate the South; this must not be "a house divided," he said. The South was as great a part of the country as the North. Before his Second Inaugural, long before the end of the war, he was making plans "to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphans—," and he was referring to the Confederate as well as the Union soldier and their families. No, Lincoln was not a good hater. He often saw what the good haters came up with:

"Lincoln was 'the Baboon President,' 'a low-bred obscene clown,' if you believed the 'Atlanta Intelligencer,' while Robert E. Lee had with his own hands flogged a slave girl and poured brine on her bleeding wounds, if you believed the 'Boston Transcript.' Each side played for hate," Carl Sandburg reported in the Lincoln biography.

The reader of "Abraham Lincoln: The War Years" becomes as involved in all the intermingled heartache and humor of the man Lincoln as the poet-historian, Sandburg, is. The ache of anxiety is acute. Lincoln could not rest, even though "he supposed it is good for the body. But the tired part of me is inside and out of reach."

Carl Sandburg is the same kind of a "Yankee" that Abraham Lincoln was. The War-Between-the-States had gone on for too many bloody, sorrowful years. Sherman's devastating march through Georgia—Sheridan's scorched earth campaign in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia—these were necessary to terminate the war. There is joy at the news of victories won,

there is appreciation of the colorful and audacious exploits of the invading Union generals; but there is also a pervading note of grief for the beautiful Shenandoah Valley laid waste and the widespread destruction in Georgia. All the wounds of war that must be bound up!

History walks through the Lincoln biography, pausing at familiar homes. The poet, Longfellow, speaks of his young son who was wounded in the last battle on the Rapidan. "Not a single murmur of complaint, though he has a wound through him a foot long."

The reader stands beside Abraham Lincoln in the reviewing stand, seeing the immensity of the Union operation. "17,000 horsemen . . . the biggest army on horses ever seen in the world . . . bigger even than the famous cavalry body of Marshal Murat with Napoleon. The infantry . . . 60,000 men, a forest of moving rifles and bayonets . . . the artillery force, some 400 cannon. Zouave regiments in baggy red trousers . . ."

This was the Army of the Potomac, men from great cities and farms, descendants of Revolutionary soldiers, immigrants whose "forefathers had fought with or against Bonaparte, Frederick the Great, Marlborough, Gustavus Adolphus, in decisive battles that hammered out historic texts of the destiny of man."

This is the wisdom of Sandburg, born of his interest in humanity, painting more than a monotonous blur of faces and uniforms streaming past for hours and hours—painting features alive with origins and roots, individuals all.

Scholarship and rare entertainment usually do not go together. In Sandburg's Abraham Lincoln books,

comedy and tragedy are generously blended, because Sandburg realized that Lincoln was both a happy and a melancholy person. Every waking moment, Father Abraham was aware that young Americans in the North and South were spilling their blood, day after day, for four long, desperate years. A weaker man could not have stood the strain.

David Homer Bates, the military telegrapher in the War Department, seemed to understand the tensions under which the President had to exist. He and Lincoln enjoyed perpetuating each other's favorite stories. Bates repeated Lincoln's story about "the man who asked a friend to lend him a clean boiled shirt, getting the answer, 'I have only two shirts, the one I have just taken off, and the one I have just put on—which will you have?'"

Lincoln, in turn, was gleefully appreciative of Bates' tale about the man who gets to the theater just as the curtain goes up. "So interested is the man in looking at what is happening on the stage that he puts his tall silk hat, open side up, on the seat next to him, without noticing a very stout woman who is nearsighted. She sits down. There is a crunching noise. The owner of the flattened hat reaches out for it as the stout woman rises. He looks at his hat, looks at her: 'Madam, I could have told you my hat wouldn't fit you before you tried it on.'"

Naturally there were people who were critical of Lincoln's "light-hearted attitude." When his friend, Isaac N. Arnold, visited him on the day after the bloody battle of Fredericksburg, Lincoln began to read aloud from Artemus Ward, one of his favorite humorists.

Arnold was so shocked that he reproached the Chief Executive. "Then . . . the President threw down the Artemus Ward book, tears streamed down his cheeks, his physical frame quivered as he burst forth, 'Mr. Arnold, if I could not get momentary respite from the crushing burden I am constantly carrying, my heart would break!' And with the pent-up cry let out, it came over Arnold that the laughter of Lincoln at times was a mask."

Sandburg says, "The Civil War, a bloody time that claimed more than a half-million of the living actually was fought over a verb. Before the war this country was referred to in all treaties as 'The United States ARE!' After the war, the new reference was 'The United States IS!'-and it is still the same now."

In this war of brother-against-brother, the second great war that the country had fought in the name of human freedom, how did we look to other nations? Did it increase our stature or diminish it? What were all the pressures that were brought to bear on Lincoln, from inside and outside? Looking at the whole panorama through Abraham Lincoln's—and Carl Sandburg's eyes—we are better able to judge our past, present and future. We are not so likely to be gullible about today's and tomorrow's headlines.

By his conduct on the day of the Second Inaugural, readers can see the shadow of future impeachment proceedings hanging over the new Vice President, Lincoln's "Andy" Johnson. Political groups marshal their forces, moving in and out in shifting patterns of good will, greed and sinister intrigue.

The reader gets so close to the lovable, long-

shanked fellow, rising from behind his desk to shake the hand of the poor, the meek, and the disgruntled, that he finds himself trying to ward off the inevitable moment of tragedy, trying to alter the course of history.

After the reader helps to carry the mortally wounded President over the sea of white, staring faces thronging Tenth Street, he finds himself pacing the hallway of the Peterson house, tiptoeing in and out of the hushed bed-chamber, thinking of modern brain surgery with a sense of damp-eyed frustration.

Carl Sandburg has said, "I never knew that one pair of eyes could shed as many tears as fell from mine when I was writing the chapters 'Blood on the Moon' and 'Vast Pageant, Then Quiet.'" Somber quiet, yes, and a tightness in your throat that won't let go, as you come to the last words. And some readers will ease the tragic intensity of heartbreak in one way, some in another. After the long minutes of homage paid, there is no law that says you can't sneak back into the book and laugh with Abraham Lincoln, alive and joking and human again—as Carl Sandburg gave him to mankind, on page after remarkable page.

If you are the author of "Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years" and "Abraham Lincoln: The War Years," you are probably the greatest patriot alive today. If you have read all six volumes, you can consider yourself among the highly literate patriots. If you have read the one-volume "distillation" which came out later, you deserve a special merit badge for caring to learn what this democracy is all about. The reader will recognize the reward that comes to him.

Something happens when you study Carl Sandburg's philosophy side-by-side with his Lincoln biography. You find yourself wondering if Carl Sandburg absorbed so much of Lincoln's point of view that it became part of his own personality, his own character. There is that mellowed way he has of looking at both sides of a question, of thinking of all people as worthy of dignity, of championing the downtrodden and showing sympathy to the defeated, and of respecting the agelessness of true patriotism.

But no, Carl Sandburg had those same qualities as a young writer. Even in "In Reckless Ecstasy," he wrote lines about being "cool and steady in all tumult of talk and prejudice" and of "shaming that man . . . who darkens the lives of others."

Only in rare moments of history do we find such coincidences—a man who is so sympathetically attuned to the very heartbeat of another person that he can write his story as though he were living it himself, feeling the same lines of care deepening his face in moments of crisis, experiencing the same desperate calm against infinite pressures, laughing the same deep laughter at an earthy joke, weeping the same "majestic tears." It seems that Carl Sandburg was meant, in the realm of divine patterns, to write the living, breathing story of Abraham Lincoln. He was born to it, across the scant thirteen years that separated the day of his birth from the day of Lincoln's death.

The manuscript of "The War Years" was huge, voluminous, hefty. Sandburg took it to Harcourt, Brace and Company in New York himself, and the train fare probably didn't cost much more than the postage

would have! There were 3,400 pages, approximately 1,175,000 words. There are 926,877 words in the Bible, including the Apocrypha. Shakespeare's complete works total 1,025,000 words.

The manuscript of "The War Years" was published in four volumes in 1939. Twenty-nine thousand sets—at twenty dollars a set—were sold within a few months.

Carl Sandburg had lived with Lincoln and Lincoln had lived with Carl Sandburg for two decades. Their fellowship had been intimate and personal. When "The War Years" had come off the press, Carl Sandburg was asked what he intended to do next. He replied, "I must first find out who this man Carl Sandburg is."

In the tapestry he had chosen to weave out of bits and scraps of an almost mislaid past, Carl Sandburg had left no loose ends and no slack in the lesser threads, drawing them up and relating them with masterful precision to the central figure. The central figure—warm, human, sensitive and full of faith that "right makes might." This is a magnificent mortal man, brought to life with a scholarship that is apparent—but without the musty, mildewed "poses of scholarship" that usually slam the door in the face of the average reader.

It would almost be impossible to guess how many authors of fiction, non-fiction, and biography have turned to Sandburg's Lincoln books for research material and inspiration. For people who "just plain like to read," they are easy to pick up and hard to put down. People who enjoy reading in bed might find them a bit heavy to balance on their ribs, but they can always roll over on their stomachs!

Carl Sandburg needs no defense; but whenever his major detractor attacks him, there should be a voice or two to speak the widespread outrage that is felt. There is a critic who, for all his Ivy League erudition, makes a hobby of delivering petulant, sulky observations about Carl Sandburg. Since a few gleeful reviewers are careful to quote these things, it is possible to dodge the books of the man who seems to write them as an excuse to dig his claws into Sandburg. Occasionally he is thwarted. Searching and researching the Dead Sea Scrolls with scholarly diligence, "that fellow" was unable to locate even one small wisp of papyrus proclaiming, "Down with Carl Sandburg!"

From his latest comment, he sounds peevishly resentful because he didn't get first try at writing Abraham Lincoln's biography. Lucidity, waspishness and intellectual snobbery would not have produced a biography with the endearing and enduring qualities of Sandburg's six volumes. An intellectual snob could not have "gotten inside of Lincoln," as Carl Sandburg did.

Sandburg can't be elbowed aside—not any more than Walt Whitman can be elbowed aside—not any more than The People can be elbowed aside! Some of those jibes at Carl Sandburg are reminiscent of a quotation from "The War Years": "A schoolboy would deserve flogging for sending out documents of such prodigious moment as come from his pen in phrases so mean and unbecoming." If Abraham Lincoln could take it, Carl Sandburg can—but it pains the people who know that all the "shrewish" critics in the world are not worth one small wrinkle on Carl Sandburg's venerable face.

The Lincoln biography is a prodigious contribution to American literature and history. Amazingly, it has come from the dedicated heart of the son of Swedish immigrants who had to toil for survival in a "have-not" family and struggle for an education. He studied and learned about heroes of many nations when he was young; and he chose an American hero to inspire him to an achievement so monumental, so challenging, that few old-line Americans had considered attempting it. A few more years and Abraham Lincoln would have passed into the limbo of George Washington, in which he would have been seen only through correspondence and documents—not through the eyes of people who could describe him with living voices.

This, then, is the ultimate patriotic gift to America—the six-volume biography of a martyred President whose mother could not write her own name, written by the son of a man who couldn't write his.

The "Lincoln tree" kept bearing fruit. In 1942, Harcourt, Brace published "Storm Over the Land." Sometimes described as a "profile of the Civil War," it is a moving photographic record of the great conflict. It contains sixty halftones from photographs and ninety-eight drawings, maps and sketches. The pictures are vivid and so is Sandburg's accompanying text, much of it taken from "The War Years" and some of it written especially for "Storm Over the Land."

In 1944, Carl Sandburg collaborated with Frederick Hill Meserve in the publication of "The Photographs of Abraham Lincoln," in which the Lincoln student can study the homespun, rough-hewn features of the Great Emancipator to his heart's content. A

large number of the photographs published in the six-volume Lincoln biography are from the Meserve collection.

## Poet of the People

“In the darkness with a great bundle of grief  
the people march,

In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for  
keeps, the people march:  
‘Where to? what next?’ ”

Critics have referred to “The People, Yes,” as Carl Sandburg’s major poetic work. The Chicago poems are powerful; they startled the country into reading poetry to see how this fellow Sandburg could put capitals on Big Shoulders and make them stick. “Cornhuskers,” “Smoke and Steel”—“Good Morning, America”—all have a special Family of Man excellence and should be read often. It is difficult to point to any particular collection of Sandburg’s poems and say, “This is the best.” Sandburg’s best poems, it usually will be found, are the ones you happen to be reading at the moment.

There has been nothing quite like “The People, Yes.” These verses are as different as the people of this Melting Pot country are different. Carl Sandburg has taken an unprecedented era of human welfare in transition and set it vibrating with words that march and

saunter, ring with glad hopes and dirges, bellow and snicker with amusement. Here is Carl Sandburg, the profound philosopher. Here is Carl Sandburg, the deft slinger of slang. "Slang," Sandburg is famous for saying, "is language that takes off its coat, spits on its hands, and goes to work." And so you get "a snootful of smoke" and "spielers" and "nix and nah."

There are Mike Fink, Johnny Appleseed, the Wright brothers, and Paul Bunyan marching and cavorting through the pages of "The People, Yes." There is baseball: "The world series pitcher . . . prays he won't get a glass arm." Thousands of years of history are reduced to: "What is history but a few Big Names plus People?" What is economy? "Economy is when you save without being stingy." What is Man? What are science, happiness, money, love, justice, propaganda, commercialism—and how do the people react to everything? "The People, Yes."

Time, to a poet who understands human nature, is timeless. Carl Sandburg, in "The People, Yes," accentuates the present and shoots missiles far into the future.

Once in awhile he refers back to the Ancients, but he does not wave his scholarship around to impress anyone. That's a thing you notice about Carl Sandburg—he doesn't try to impress you. And you know instinctively that you'd do a darned poor job of trying to impress him—whatever you think you are. It reminds you of that wonderful spoof on pomposity in "The People, Yes":

"I am John Jones."

"Take a chair."

"Yes, and I am the son of John  
Throckmorton Jones."

"Is that possible? Take two chairs."

Published in 1936, Carl Sandburg had managed to write his cross-section observations on humanity while he was deep in the production of "Abraham Lincoln: The War Years." Perhaps much of the inspiration for "The People, Yes," came from Lincoln and the detailed history of the country during a period exceeding one hundred years. In "The Prairie Years," Sandburg had "seen" the future Republican Presidential candidate going into politics in 1834. The pattern of the people emerged too, and it would be a poet's pleasure to weigh and compare, to follow the muddy roads of the 1800's up into the paved highways of the modern age and look at the travelers with a poet's searching eye.

"Dedicated to Contributors Dead and Living," the collection includes everything from "psalms nobody would want to laugh at" to "the roar and whirl of street crowds, work gangs, sidewalk clamor, with interludes of midnight cool blue and inviolable stars over the phantom frames of skyscrapers."

It is a good idea to get a grip on yourself before you start reading "The People, Yes" in the library or study hall. The chunks of humor jump out at the reader, and he is laughing before he knows it.

"What are the two smallest things mentioned in the Bible? The widow's mite and the wicked flee."

Then there is the raw nakedness of his verses de-

scribing "political machines" and "business machines," and these no one will laugh at.

Although he does not choose to be a rhymer, there is a definite rhythm to Sandburg's choice of words and his manner of assembling them. Once in awhile, as he points out himself, he indulges in "jig time and tap dancing nohow classical" and "plain and irregular sounds. . . ." The irregular sounds resemble the deliberate introductions of discordant combinations of notes in a musical composition. This is life—the change of pace, the abrupt shift from the "status quo."

Henry L. Mencken, the "image demolisher" of his day, thought that Sandburg was "thoroughly individual, a true original, his own man." Sandburg, like Mencken, has no kind words for hypocrites.

Considering several lines that were published in 1936, you'd think that some of the hucksters would be ashamed of themselves by now, but the "old gravy train" keeps rolling along. The "hard-sell" gets this kind of treatment in "The People, Yes":

"The better-than-all-others-liar, the easy  
payments liar, the greatest-on-earth liar,  
the get-rich-quick-liar. . . ."

Carl Sandburg knows all kinds of poetry. He studied formal classical poetry in college and read it in his spare time, because he wanted to read it. Walt Whitman, of course, was his guiding star. Sandburg thought that Whitman was "the only truly epic poet that America has produced. In his Americanism, his influence abroad, Whitman was truly unique."

Too many poets seem to write for their own per-

sonal satisfaction, to thrill themselves and a small circle of admirers with their own poses of cleverness. Carl Sandburg communicates; he identifies himself with the people who will read his poetry. He supplies them with phrases to voice the dreams and hopes that might forever go unspoken.

Why does Sandburg choose to write solely in free verse? Sometimes, he has pointed out, a poet will distort his original purpose—"capitulate to necessity"—for the sake of a word that rhymes. He quotes from Oliver Wendell Holmes: "Rhythm alone is a tether. But rhymes are iron fetters." Sandburg refuses to be tethered, rhyme-wise or philosophy-wise. He is a forthright man; he will say what he has to say in the medium that suits him best.

Nothing slows the momentum of Sandburg's verse. There is discipline in his choice of words and phrases, and in the way he swings them with lusty vigor. You read Carl Sandburg and you know he has sweat his share of creative blood searching for the word, the phrase, that will best express his feeling about the common man and his place in history, in the world of nations. Colleagues who watched Sandburg work, back in the old newspaper days, said that he might carry a poem around in his pocket for a year or more, working it over until he was satisfied with it. He edits his manuscripts and proof pages with care and skill. He likes words that are strong, lean, sharp. He weighs nouns, sniffs suspiciously at adjectives, runs his senses over verbs to feel the motion and rhythm of them.

The rollicking folksongs that Sandburg loves to sing are in rhyme. If he chooses to be "free" in the

writing of his mighty, soaring verses and whispering word-melodies, Sandburg does not disapprove of rhymed verse. He has a great-hearted affection for the rhymes of Longfellow, and he would take delight in a verse from "Stevie" Benet's "William Sycamore":

"And some remember a white starched lap  
And an ewer with silver handles;  
But I remember a coonskin cap  
And the smell of bayberry candles."

Sandburg admires many of his fellow poets, whether they use free verse or formal rhyming styles, or both. Robert Frost has said that "free verse is like playing tennis without a net," but Carl Sandburg has saluted him—in free verse. He has also paid appreciative homage to Emily Dickinson, Amy Lowell, Stephen Vincent Benet, Walt Whitman, and other poets who have aroused surges of warmth in his heart.

There are always a few critics straining themselves to cut a man like Sandburg down to size. They have said that his poetry is not formal enough to be poetry. At one time he was jumped upon by a group of them. You mention one of the old "New Critics" whose name is familiar to you. Almost too quickly, Carl Sandburg says, "The name means nothing to me." Perhaps he has forgotten, you think. Then again, that answer would be typical of Carl Sandburg. "The name means nothing to me." Instead of wasting his energy battling them, instead of snarling contemptuously back at them, he builds a high enough wall so they blunt their claws trying to reach over it—a wall of gentle dismissal.

Sandburg generalizes about the people of whom

he disapproves, but he is quick to identify the ones he loves. He loves the "common people," and they are not faceless masses to him. They are members of Abraham Lincoln's "Family of Man," and Carl Sandburg says they deserve justice, mercy, dignity. Out of the Family of Man, Carl hopes, will come a "world family of nations." Step by labored step, with wisecracks and philosophical observations relating to characters legendary and real in the background, Carl Sandburg traces the forward movement of The People, inch by inch, step by step. The Big Names have their moment on the stage and then recede; the people move on. The pattern, in light and shadow of description, favors the forward march of the common man.

If anyone wants to call Carl Sandburg a liberal or a radical because of his devotion to the cause of the downtrodden, it's all right with him. Billy Sunday said he sounded like a "Red," and that is still the favored line of attack. When any person sounds too much in favor of brotherly love, justice and charity, he usually is labeled a "Red"—which is giving the communists a ridiculous amount of credit for following the teachings of Jesus.

What does a writer value most? Time to write and think. Probably there are a couple of things that no working writer cares to be bothered with—social popularity, and a million dollars. There are many kinds of "money people" in Carl Sandburg's book:

"Who was that Chicago Jew who threw millions  
of dollars into Negro schools of the South?  
Why did he once tell another Jew,  
'I'm ashamed to have so much money?'"

"The people move eternally in elements of surprise." Less than fifty years ago, Europe throbbed to Big Names, with Czar-King-Kaiser-Emperor, in front of them. There have been a multitude of changes across all the pages of history. In "The People, Yes" Carl Sandburg quotes many opinions:

"'The fundamental weakness in every empire and every great civilization was the weakness in the character of its upper classes,' ventured a Yale professor in a solemn moment."

Weakness? Questionable ethics that are taken for granted? This is a good time to point out that Abraham Lincoln referred to the war-time profiteers of his day as "respectable scoundrels." When they circulated a forged letter of defeat in 1864, and sent gold prices skyrocketing:

"Lincoln groaned, 'I wish every one of them had his devilish head shot off!'"

You hear about stockpiling, and an emergency planner testifies that "anybody on the gravy train . . . wouldn't let go without a struggle," and you think of the attitudes of the "Shoddy" people during the Civil War.

But there are millions of people who will never consider helping themselves to anything that is "nailed down." Here is the splendid hope of this democracy, says Carl Sandburg:

"This old anvil laughs at many hammers.  
There are men who can't be bought."

Carl Sandburg writes the truth as he has seen it, as he has probed for it. Rica Brenner, in "Ten Modern

Poets," speaks of "The dreaming, brooding aspect of the man, his desire to look beneath the surface of things for the last reality, the mystic essence of the universe." The people have never had so perceptive a champion since Abraham Lincoln. Sandburg is a prophet with a tape-measure, calculating the progress of humanity, sometimes looking far ahead for a sublime moment when the Family of Man will live in mutual peace and understanding.

The American people are learning to vote for the American People and, if they can set an example for the rest of the world, totalitarianism will be swept aside by the forces of free people. In a thriving democracy, revolution is never necessary, says Carl Sandburg. "Evolution" is Sandburg's word. In certain "feudal" nations there is revolution after revolution, and nothing gets settled. You ask yourself why, and you start to think. Carl Sandburg knows about this thinking business, from 'way back:

"Who knows the answers, the cold inviolable truth? . . .

I stand in this whirlpool and tell you  
I don't know and if I did know I  
would tell you and all I am doing  
now is to guess and I give  
you my guess as any man's guess.

Yet I have worked out this guess for  
myself as nobody's yes-man and  
when it happens I no longer own  
the priceless little piece of  
territory under my own hat, so far

gone that I can't even do my own  
guessing for myself,

Then I will know I am one of the  
unburied dead, one of the moving  
walking stalking talking unburied dead."

People who are "nobody's yes-man" will always be frowned upon by the millions who enjoy being apathetic—the millions who do not realize that they might still be part of the "lowly rabble," as their grandfathers were, if there hadn't been a few men with the strength of character to say "No!" on behalf of their fellow-men.

That is what you think, as you compare this thriving country with those feudal nations. When you read Carl Sandburg and Abraham Lincoln, you feel a chain reaction starting up in your brain. Both Sandburg and Lincoln have made some interesting statements on money, property rights, and the privileges of the worker.

In 1939, Carl Sandburg would say with sprightly wit on a radio program: "All of us would like to see an arrangement whereby the idle rich and the idle poor could make a two-power pact to take care of each other." That arrangement would clear the track for the people who really want to work! He thought that some lines should be drawn at the point where a fair rate of profit becomes "just plain wolfish greed." In discussions about the United States starting a war with Mexico for the purpose of territorial expansion, Carl Sandburg repeated Congressman Abraham Lincoln's story about the farmer who was accused of being greedy for land. "I ain't greedy for more land—no,

I only want what jines mine." Today, it's the "wolfish greed" of dictators and tyrants that should worry us most.

To a group of New York workingmen who had recently organized in favor of trade-unions, Lincoln said in 1864:

"You comprehend . . . that the existing rebellion means more, and tends to more than the perpetuation of African slavery—that it is, in fact, a war upon the rights of all the working people.

"The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all working people, of all nations, and tongues, and kindreds. Nor should this lead to a war upon property, or the owners of property. Property is the fruit of labor—property is desirable—is a positive good in the world. That some should be rich shows that others may become rich, and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise. Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another; but let him labor diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."

The next day, in answer to people who said that slavery was good, Lincoln wrote these profound words, "I never knew a man who wished to be himself a slave. Consider if you know any good thing that no man desires for himself." Applying all of this wisdom to the world around us, it is possible to follow Carl Sandburg's recipe and do some "guessing for ourselves."

In "The People, Yes" there are odes to the little people whose pennies, nickels and dimes build huge fortunes for the indolent. Sandburg puts the divine

right of royal princes and the divine right of "money princes" in the same category. Around 1936 and 1937, the cafe society playboy was still a prime national fixture, with the newspapers reporting whenever he blew his nose, or got a divorce and got married again, which would keep him in the news almost constantly. Carl Sandburg saw him as a useless blight on the face of humanity. He would compare the "pipsqueaks" and the society princesses with the clerks and laborers and other useful members of society.

It will be interesting to see what Carl Sandburg will say about the noticeable shift in values. The gap between the rich man's son and the workingman has been closing. There are always a few exceptions, but a number of "dynasty scions" are working hard—especially the ones who are in politics. President Kennedy, as President Hoover used to do, endorses his "pay check" right over to charity; and that is big of him, considering the wear and tear of his job. Of course he gets his rent free on that house in Washington, but his pretty little wife is an excellent home decorator and maybe he chips in for a bucket of paint once in awhile.

Speaking of President Hoover, it is almost a contradiction to see the way he and President Harry Truman sit around like a couple of old buddies. If you know your history, you wonder what they have in common—a staunch Republican like Mr. Hoover, and an ardent New Deal Democrat like Mr. Truman. But both have sat on the mightiest hot-seat in the world, and they must have some wonderfully mellowed recollections.

Leaders, great men? "No matter how important you are, you may get measles," Carl Sandburg says.

The people look at their leaders and make their choices from among the Big Names—and it turns out, often enough, that no names are bigger than the people. "The People, Yes." They might have gone to bed, grinning behind their yes-man masks of agreeable acquiescence, on the night of the 1948 election. Everybody of importance knew that Thomas E. Dewey was as good as elected President—the pollsters, the men of high authority, most of the newspapers. But did anyone really ask The People? Harry Truman didn't win that election—The People did. And even if you had voted for Tom Dewey you might have thrown back your head and laughed with delight because it could happen here. Here, in this magnificent, unpredictable country of ours!

That is the essence of this American Dream. Just about the time the world is pointing a finger at us and calling us a capitalistic "dictatorship," the people speak and prove that this is a democracy.

Carl Sandburg sees the people grinding forward—"The People, Yes." They may not always be right, but they keep moving forward and the country moves forward and the work gets done.

Sandburg says:

"Man is a long time coming  
Man will yet win."

When you are reading "The People, Yes," you find yourself thinking. There is this great thing about Carl

Sandburg. He makes you think. He makes you wonder about the Family of Man—its achievements, its mistakes, and all its hopes and dreams throughout history.

## War on Paper

There had been the writing of "The People, Yes." There had been the completing of the four-volume "War Years" which brought Carl Sandburg the Pulitzer Prize and would bring him degrees at Harvard, Yale, New York University, Wesleyan, Lafayette, Lincoln Memorial, Syracuse, Rollins, Dartmouth and at Augustana in the United States and Uppsala University in Sweden. In 1940, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Honors were being piled upon honors.

During one evening in 1939, the years rolled back for Carl Sandburg. He was the guest of honor at a Knox College Club meeting in New York.

Even though he had been scrubbing floors in the barbershop in 1895, Carl had heard about a Knox student named Otto Harbach winning an inter-collegiate oratorical contest that year. Galesburg had made a gala affair of saluting young Mr. Harbach, who had gone on to New York to write plays called "The Firefly" and "Roberta," and lyrics for "Rose Marie," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and "Indian Love Call."

Now, in 1939, Carl Sandburg was meeting Otto Harbach in person for the first time. A one-act play, which Mr. Harbach had written especially for the occasion, featured a scene in which the ghosts of Abraham Lincoln and Newman Bateman, the former Knox president, talked about Carl Sandburg. When Carl was on the milk route during those "leanest years," he had poured milk into a jug at Mr. Bateman's house. He had always admired Mr. Bateman because he was the last man to shake Lincoln by the hand before he left for Washington to be inaugurated. Mr. Harbach's "gift" to Carl Sandburg was a heartwarming one.

Appearing on "America's Town Meeting of the Air" in 1939, Carl Sandburg asked for "reverence for the human mind and spirit." He believed—and still believes—that light is needed "to illuminate the debauchery of public opinion, drugging the public mind."

In 1940, Carl Sandburg was invited to Harvard where the Lincoln biographer heard President James B. Conant say of him, "His poetry aims at the capture of the American rhythm, and he has in this year of crisis fortified national morale by serving as Washington correspondent of the Lincoln administration."

The elder Sandburgs loved their home, but they were beginning to notice the cold north wind sweeping down across Lake Michigan in the winter. They were planning to move farther south when World War II involved Carl Sandburg in a delaying action. He wasn't exactly "drafted" for writing service, and he knew he could have turned down the reporting job—but he was in favor of men who "speak their patriotic ideals against the storm."

For awhile, it had almost looked as though Carl Sandburg would get into politics. In 1940, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had written, "What is this I hear about the possibility of your running for Congress in the Southwest District of Michigan? I sincerely hope the rumor is true—incidentally, I have a real belief that you could win and it would be grand to have your kind of Lincoln liberal in the Congress." Someone had taken a poll, which Carl Sandburg had not taken very seriously. Undoubtedly he would have won any election he went into. The Democrats knew he was The Poet of the People, and the Republicans considered him "highly respectable" after he wrote the huge Lincoln biography—even though he had once been an active "radical Socialist." It was good for a chuckle or two. Carl Sandburg had already spent more than four years in national politics—during Lincoln's administration. Perhaps that was enough for him.

Carl Sandburg went from "The War Years" into reporting another war, World War II, in which the United States was not yet involved. Putting on his seven-league boots, he waded into all the controversial issues with all the fervor of his early Socialist reporting days. On one hand, he had studied the futility of war. He might have been picturing a Hitler when he wrote in "The People, Yes":

"The ache for glory sends free people into  
slavery."

He had asked:

"Who was that St. Louis mathematician who  
figured it cost an average of \$37,000 to  
kill each soldier killed in the World War?

He figured too on a way of offering, in case of war, \$1,000, one grand, to every deserting soldier.

Each army, the idea ran, would buy off the other before the war could get started."

Poignantly appealing was the verse about the little girl watching a troop parade and asking what soldiers are.

"They are for war. They fight and each tries to kill as many on the other side as he can."

The girl held still and studied . . .

"Sometime they'll give a war and nobody will come."

There were these and many other poems about the sick, useless horror of war, inevitably slowing the progress of civilization. So you would be certain that Carl Sandburg, reporting in Home Front Memo for the "Chicago Times" in the period before Pearl Harbor, would use all his poetic and patriotic zeal to keep us minding our own business on this side of the Atlantic. Quite a few prominent Americans, under the banner of America Firsters, were content to let the Nazis spread themselves all over Europe—delicately changing the subject when concentration camps and gas chambers were mentioned in polite society. It was none of our business, especially since we had been doing business nicely with Hitler—if you can figure that out.

Carl Sandburg, who was nobody's yes-man, thought it was our business. If there was anything he hated worse than war, it was tyranny. He saw what Hitler was doing to the cause of human freedom and justice,

He saw that the Nazis would never stop, unless they were halted in their tracks. Did the America Firsters want to wait until we saw the whites of the Nazi's eyes and then shoot? Should we sit peaceably by while they glutted their appetites on the blood of the helpless? Carl Sandburg—pacifist, idealist, lover of peace—was up in arms on the Home Front. Aside from Americans who enlisted abroad, he was probably the first American patriot to involve himself so emphatically in World War II. To him, the America Firsters bore a close resemblance to the Know-Nothings of Lincoln's day.

The eye of a poet and historian is not a comfortable eye. It sees the present in relation to the grim past. A man like Carl Sandburg can look at a charming group of D.A.R.'s daintily sipping tea from bone china, and see behind them half-frozen soldiers in bloody rags at Valley Forge. Their ancestors.

Twenty-five years before, in Chicago, Sandburg's reporting beat had been the heart-beat of a roaring city. Now it was the heart-beat of a nation and a war-torn world. He roamed the journalistic field in "Home Front Memo," which was published in book form by Harcourt, Brace in 1943. About Billy Mitchell, he said, "His case for air power is now well proven . . . he could not keep his mouth shut about needless death and tragic unreadiness to come."

Sandburg wrote his admiration for Eric A. Johnston, the Seattle businessman and President of the Chamber of Commerce, who had actually dared to act friendly with William Green and Philip Murray of the A.F.L. and C.I.O. Now, Johnston warned in 1943, was

the time for business and labor to worry together about postwar unemployment. "Otherwise the government will have to handle it." Sandburg pointed out that Johnston considered capitalism "a dynamic, evolving structure. . . . The sky is the limit if we but work together and think daringly." But "to go back to prewar capitalism is to be sunk."

About regulating international affairs in the sometimes explosive Family of Man, Carl Sandburg said in 1943, "Force isn't worth so much. Force with control is what counts."

The World War II features ran from April 1941 to mid-June of 1943. In "Home Front Memo," Sandburg often talked about freedom in terms of hard work. We can't have freedom "without chastening periods when we get our shoulders under heavy loads of responsibility and duty." "'Free as a bird' is a nice antique phrase," Sandburg said, but, "unless a bird has at least as much discipline as freedom, he goes crash."

In a Treasury Department series, syndicated in newspapers and published in book form as "There Were Giants in the Land," Carl Sandburg pointed out: "Lincoln had only one fixed policy—saving the union and freeing the slaves. Lincoln's Congress considered him a tyrant and a despot. Only a handful of Congressmen favored him." Sandburg knew that Lincoln was described as "Decisive, spectacular—slow, indecisive, vacillating, lacking in vigor." These are thoughts to bear in mind when contemporary presidents are evaluated. "In the Spring of 1861 Lincoln took on dictatorial powers. He started a war without asking Congress, declared a blockade, called for troops to put

down an insurrection, lifted for immediate use millions of dollars from the United States Treasury without authorized appropriation by Congress."

Carl Sandburg dedicated the published book, "Home Front Memo," to Stephen Vincent Benet, "who knew the distinction between art and propaganda in the written or spoken word. . . . He illustrated the code and creed of those writers who seek to widen the areas of freedom for all men, knowing that men of ideas vanish first when freedom vanishes. . . ."

Mrs. Sandburg, youngest daughter Helga, and the late Mrs. Edward Steichen had gone southward "searching for Eden" before the war. About twenty-five miles south of Asheville, North Carolina—just beyond Hendersonville—they had been captivated by the quiet isolation and breathless beauty of the charming village of Flat Rock. As soon as the war was over, the Sandburg family packed up all their books and goats and earthly possessions and moved south to that glory land in the valley of the Great Smokies. On one hundred and thirty acres of rich grazing land, the Sandburgs have built up a herd of more than one hundred handsome goats, among them some of the finest Nubians in the country. Mrs. Sandburg has become an expert on dairy goats. In addition to supplying all the milk, butter and cheese for the Sandburg home and some of the surrounding territory, milk from the goats is distributed to hospitals.

Here, in a 130-year-old white farmhouse with a high front porch, a wealth of greenery about him and a view of the distant mountains, Carl Sandburg settled down to finish his first novel, begun during World War

II but probably always somewhere in the back of his mind. "At sixty-five, I began my first novel," Carl Sandburg explains, "and the five years I took to finish it, I was still traveling, still a seeker."

Carl Sandburg will always be a seeker of knowledge. Any discussion about "Remembrance Rock" arouses awareness of the dearth of book-reading knowledge seekers in the United States today.

Recently there have been news stories about Communist librarians going from house to house with library cards, registering each family. The State, of course, keeps track of the books that each individual reads, but most of the great Russians—Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Gorky, Tergenev, Chekhov—are on their shelves; and so are many of the great Americans, especially those who indulge in "realistic novels" about the seamy side of American life.

Modern Russians, visiting this country, are shocked to find that so few Americans are familiar with the works of major American authors. The Russians read them eagerly and discuss them. The average American does not even know how he is being portrayed by authors who are describing him to the reading world—and to posterity. Sauk Centre doesn't want to read "Main Street," but Moscow does.

A contemporary Russian author has referred to the warm devotion of the illiterate peasants toward Tolstoy, commenting on their misty-eyed gratitude when they realized that Communist education would make it possible for them and their children to read "War and Peace" at last.

A recent report has noted that a Russian first grad-

er's reading vocabulary has more than six times as many words as an American first grader's, and that Russian sixth graders are reading big, thick classics. That is something that nobody—but nobody—can accuse the Russians of copying from the United States!

We can only look ahead and try to guess what almost total literacy can do for the Russians. It has become a matter of pride with them. A Communistic-Socialistic form of government, with people who have been trained to WANT to read, may be more of a threat to intellectually-stagnant Americans than they realize. Like Sputnik I, it probably won't be apparent until some type of shocking impact is felt. Ideologically as well as scientifically, Communism is persistent.

While they are still in high school, American students should become familiar with the books of at least ten recognized American authors and several of the enduring works of writers and historians through the ages. This is an assignment they should make in the name of self-discipline, outside of school. If they are not able to go on to college, there is nothing to stop them from reading books and acquiring knowledge in their spare time.

Most Americans do not know how to read books. If they decide to read a book, once in a blue moon, this is supposed to be a great thing. "Well now, here I have a book," they say. "I am going to make myself read this book. Now I have finished the first chapter. Now I have finished the second chapter. Now I am half through it, and I will stop to give myself a pat on the

back. I will go and tell my neighbors that I am right in the middle of this important book!"

Reading should be a continuous, casual part of life. Americans should always be reading a book, and going on to the next one. An hour—or just a few minutes in bed at night, if their brains aren't almost embalmed from watching TV—will get people through quite a number of books in a year. Self-discipline used to be the backbone of the country; now everybody has curvature of the spine from lying in front of television sets.

Is it for this that the early labor organizers suffered persecution—so the workers of the country could spend their hard-won leisure time on “easy entertainment”? There are some fine programs on television, the sort that make people think and broaden their educational horizons; but there are too many of the kind that put no strain on the imagination.

This thriving democracy has been a hot-bed of creativity, but will it stay that way? “You, young fellow, sprawled in a trance in front of that TV set—what is your great ambition in life?” “Huh? To get a forty-inch picture tube—with color, natch!” Not to invent a better television set, not to write some good programs for TV, not to solve the world's problems—just to be pleasantly entertained with the least possible effort.

## Remembrance Rock

Mark Twain said it: "A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read."

Carl Sandburg, in his chair on the other side of the desk, touched the copy of "Remembrance Rock" with affection. "Some day this book will be discovered. It's my favorite—next to the Lincoln books."

Mr. Sandburg does not feel that "Remembrance Rock" has had a chance to speak for itself yet. Weighing its bulk in one hand, he spoke with some regret, "I know what happened. Most of the reviewers hefted it and decided they couldn't take time to read anything this size. People don't want to bother with such big books these days."

You listen and you know what he means. Reviewers aside, most Americans seldom bother to read even one small book a year. That doesn't stop them from making self-assured generalizations about national and international politics, with only a smattering of half-learned high school history to back up their statements. Usually they can dig out a hackneyed proverb

to justify their arguments. And that's when you remember that quotation from "Remembrance Rock": "Life can get so stupid only stupid proverbs can cover it." And you sometimes wonder how Carl Sandburg can love *The People* so much, when so few of them take time to read him.

In a country like the United States, people should care to learn what Democracy really is—and the price that brave men paid for it.

O. D. Hormel, writing for "The Christian Science Monitor," saw a number of similarities between "Remembrance Rock" and "War and Peace." "Here, for the first time, is a novel comparable with the greatest—one which should certainly take its place beside Tolstoy's 'War and Peace.' 'Remembrance Rock' is a rich and perceptive embodiment of the American Dream. . . ."

Other critics have called "Remembrance Rock" a "masterpiece of period reconstruction," "wise and tolerant and understanding," and "a panoramic epic depicting how liberty was conceived, fought for, and won." Harry Golden calls it "a respectable candidate for *The Great American Novel*."

Any small points of criticism could just as easily be applied to a host of older, highly-respected classics. There is less of the murky moodiness that characterizes many of them — that feeling of cramped, stifled minds in dark tight little rooms, escaping occasionally into narrow, shadowed streets. "Remembrance Rock" has the sweeping vitality of a wide, multi-weathered country, with people to match.

A "Christian Century" reviewer is enthusiastic

about "Remembrance Rock," with misgivings that are much too true. "What Sandburg is trying to do, it is clear, is to reassure younger Americans, particularly those in the generation that fought in the recent war, of their country's greatness, and of the abiding worth of the contribution they have made to its future. Unfortunately, it is doubtful whether many of that generation will read a novel of 1067 pages. But those who do, and their elders likewise, will be richly rewarded."

Not only their elders, but their "youngers," it might be added. Any young student will be superbly prepared for future American History classes if he has read "Remembrance Rock" first. Each assignment will have come alive for him, before he walks into it. His mind will vibrate with the feeling that this is not a dusty mass of dates and details; he has been here before—on the Mayflower, suffering privations with the Pilgrims—slinking from boulder to fence-row, daring to exchange fire with the invincible Redcoats on the road to Lexington—marching jauntily through Philadelphia with General George Washington's ragged army—fighting valiantly for the Blue or the Gray, brother against brother, in the bloodiest war of all—storming at last up the beaches of Normandy and Kwajalein and Okinawa, with the finality of the mushroom cloud rising like an exclamation point above the welter of blood and drama and hope and death. Always groping, searching, asking—with people who know how to grope and search and ask, with patriots who see a great country becoming greater and keep asking, "What is best for this beloved country of mine?"

In "Remembrance Rock," Carl Sandburg is a lamp

lighter along the highroads and back lanes of American history. The reader feels the glow of patriotism arousing him to new awareness of freedoms dearly bought. There is loose-jointed "corny" country humor and careful city wit to suit the page in time.

The Prologue, "Justice Windom's Box," introduces former Supreme Court Justice Oliver Brand Windom, whose radio address to the nation sets the mood for the opening of his strongbox, in which the patriotic historical novel comes to light. Also in the strongbox is a bronze plaque, with Roger Bacon's "Four Stumbling Blocks to Truth" engraved on it, which has been worn by each of the heroines in the novel; and there are instructions about secreting certain "memorial dust" under Remembrance Rock.

In Book One, "The First Comers," the reader finds himself in Scrooby, England, with the "queer people" who later become the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock. Shakespeare is busy writing plays, and Queen Elizabeth I is on the throne of England. Later, in the New World, people like Elder William Brewster, Miles Standish, Roger Williams and Governor William Bradford go about their business of settling new colonies. John Spong and his daughter Remember are the major fictional personalities in the Plymouth story. Roger Williams, finely portrayed, makes lesser men shrink by comparison.

There are references to those Puritans who had fled tyranny and bigotry in England, and now relished it in Plymouth. Of one man whose influence had swayed the judges in the colony, it was said, "He knows the overrighteous ones and the scoundalmongers

and those who lick scandal over their slithering tongues. Wherefore we are to have a holy day of justice with raw, red flesh laid bare on a woman's back from the whiplash. For this the sanctified journeyed across the sea and fought the wilderness and made an example to the world." Still, there is always the hope, "Though freedom comes slow it does come."

There is a touching description of Elder Brewster when Remember Spong visits him in his library and marvels at his collection of more than four hundred books, some in Greek and Hebrew. "Remember was surprised. The humility and frankness of Elder Brewster pleased her. Near seventy years old, he had read all those books, besides the Bible, several times. And he was saying he didn't know it all. He read books hoping they would help him to know." Elder Brewster did not confine his knowledge-seeking to books, we learn. When a Jesuit priest and a Jewish peddler were in the neighborhood, he called them in to talk with him. He was a seeker of knowledge, never satisfied.

In the second section of the book, "The Arch Begins," revolutionary-minded Young America opens its heart, its mouth and its doors. Smouldering-eyed Sons of Liberty are described by Marintha Wilming as "Lost men bawling to other lost men where to go." Trying to stay smugly aloof, the young dressmaker closes her mind to discussions about the Boston Massacre of 1770, the Boston Tea Party of 1773, and all the pre-Revolutionary plots simmering and seething around each corner. There are reasons, after awhile, why she grows weary of the Tory patrons of the dress shop and "their endless prattle of style and fashion,

women peacocks and ape men who believed in money and show like a religion. . . .”

Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Thomas Paine, and other historical figures are big as life in this chapter; and one of General George Washington’s aides says of him, “He stays with you when you go away from him.”

The reader can stand on a doorstep in Philadelphia watching Washington’s battered Continental Army pass through:

“Marching barefoot men and men with shoes tied and bandaged to their feet, men with shoes patched and repatched and bound and rebound with thongs and strings till the wonder was they didn’t drop off the feet. . . .

Marching they came with drums beating and the fifers shrilling ‘Yankee Doodle’ and ‘The White Cockade’ . . . .

Marching, they were more than two hours marching around that corner of Front and Market street—.”

What of the arch that was beginning to form? “The rainbow is an arch. Where you find truth, love and harmony and lasting strength, an arch bends and curves over it as a blessing and an oath. Hate and pride break arches. Love and understanding build unbreakable arches.”

In Book Three, “The Arch Holds,” Joel and Brook-sany Wimbler and their baby daughter, Mibs, are the pilgrims of the pioneer age, heading westward into Illinois. Part of a group of abolitionists, they are “queer people” again, ahead of them “a vision of Christian

farmers and citizens shaping local and national affairs. . . . They were to fight and overcome ignorance and sin."

When it came to fighting sin, the small pioneer town of New Era, Illinois, had its share of assistance. As the traveling reformers and evangelists came and went, one citizen observed, "Was there ever a time when a poor bewildered sinner had his ears beset with such a variety of voices instructing him what to do about national sin in general and his personal sin in particular?"

The most memorable character in this part of the book is Omri Winwold. The story of his "reformation" is the story of every man who sees the light. He becomes something of a philosopher in the village of New Era—at a time when black was black, and white was white. Perhaps Omri was conditioned by his experiences as a bobbin boy in a pre-Civil War cotton mill in Boston:

"At 4:40 in the morning a bell rang for the town to hear and he was out of bed into his clothes and inside the mill gates before they closed at 4:45. A bell rang for breakfast at 6:35 and rang for work again at 7:00. At 12 noon the bell rang for dinner and at 12:25 for work again. At 6:00 o'clock a bell rang for supper and at 6:25 for work again. At 8:15 a bell rang and mill gates opened to let him go to his boardinghouse and his room where six cots stood in a row and he could creep between blankets and sleep till a bell rang again at daybreak in summer, in darkness on winter mornings. . . . His pay of \$2.00 a week was better than the six-year-old girls paid 90 cents a week or the ten- and

twelve-year-olds getting \$1.40 and \$1.50 a week. His nights from 8:30 till 4:30 in the morning he had free. His Sundays he had free. He heard it explained how the mill used to have a fifteen-hour workday but now it was only fourteen hours and twenty-five minutes." It is no wonder that Omri asked himself a question one day in that mill. "Would I be any worse off in jail than I am here?"

Even though he is a Lincoln man, Omri later recalls that period of drudgery with indignation. "To him it was a cruel and tragic thing that thousands of grown men and women had a fourteen-hour work day, six days a week, and it was an infamy, beyond language and past any words of indictment or damnation, that skinny and thwarted children of six and eight years of age should perform routine clockwork automatic motions twelve and fourteen hours a day for ninety cents a week, six days a week." He had cried out, "Am I crazy or what? How can those New England abolitionists keep their eyes always fastened on the monstrous sin of slavery in the South and never turn their eyes on the infamies and sins under the roofs of the near-by New England mills? I can't join the abolitionists because I couldn't enjoy being so damned self-righteous."

New states were being settled; pioneer wagons were moving ever westward, the homesteaders singing:

"We cross the prairies as of old  
The pilgrims crossed the sea . . ."

Bitterness between the abolitionists and slave states flared furiously as the balance of power between

the states became the vital issue. Would new states be admitted slave or free? And, in the event of secession, how could the Mississippi River be cut in two? People from New Era drove to Galesburg to stand in a raw northwest wind for three hours, while that awkward Lincoln fellow spoke his piece against a smart politician like Steve Douglas.

Mention is made of plantation owners who were privileged to break the leg of a slave if he ran away once—and no questions asked. There was some sympathy for slave owners who didn't tear families apart and who took good care of their Negroes—but the New Era abolitionists kept getting hotter under the collar at the thought of people buying and selling human beings like cattle.

The hypocrites and fanatics on either side are viewed with a dispassionate eye. There is an unforgettable definition of a bigot. "A bigot is a proud man who enjoys his pride and can gloat over how good he is. A bigot can see only one side, his side, of a human issue. He will not admit that the other side can be partly right and he is no more right than they . . . The bigot hates for the joy of hating. The bigot needs our understanding without sympathy or pity."

Even with arguments about the Dred Scott Decision and John Brown and the Underground Railway, there was time for chuckling about the Yankee lawyer in Peoria being challenged to a duel by a Kentuckian. Asked what weapons he would choose, the Yankee sent back word, "Cornstalks."

In "The Arch Holds," there are gallant Confederate and Union men and an impartial mixture of villains

on both sides; and there is both criticism and respect for the motivations and principles of the North and the South. There are interludes of warm sentiment and all the agony of separation that a war brings. The nightmare horror of the battlefield and the living death of the prison camp are experienced from the inside. The rockets' red glare of patriotism brings illumination to the solemn words of Justice Oliver Windom: "They ought not to be forgotten, the dead who hold in their clenched hands that which became the heritage of us, the living."

The curtain falls slowly in the Epilogue, "Storm and Stars," as Justice Windom's grandson faces up to the burden of bitterness he has carried home from World War II. The arch still holds for now, and "everywhere the same sun moves to shine over the Family of Man." There are still homes that are "rocking with fellowship, clean laughter, books, scholarship and a questing for ideas."

But there are still the shadows that make for bad dreams. Always the world would wonder about those last minutes in the bunkers under Berlin. "The two little men, the once fearsome and powerful spokesmen of the Greater Germany, they with their women companions made ready with poison and bullet for death and dissolution. . . . Did the stench of the millions of deaths they had ordered reach them at all with any faint putrid odor?"

There is mystic power in a modern legend, told by a Quaker friend of one of the characters in "Remembrance Rock":

"Into a solemn ceremonial service in the Cologne

Cathedral had walked the high Leader of the Nazis, the author of *Mein Kampf*, with his guards. From the altar steps the minister spoke saying that all who had a Jew for their father must leave the church. Along the aisles to the door moved a score or so. Next came the edict that each having a Jewish grandfather must leave and a half-dozen or more trickled out. Then came the stern pronouncement, 'All who have a Jewess for their mother must leave the church.' Then from the cross behind the altar with blood-matted hair over the forehead, there stepped down the silent majestic Christ figure, moving in a fantasy almost unbelievable down the wide center aisle and slowly out the front door."

In each era of Sandburg's historical novel, there is a special lady who is admired for "grace of spirit." Justice Oliver Windom, through the pen of Carl Sandburg, has patterned all of his heroines after the young wife of his grandson. In each book, we meet that same very tall, very slender girl, with high cheekbones and a generous mouth.

Carl Sandburg's trademark in "Remembrance Rock" is "Win." His philosophy is strong in the characters of all the men whose names begin with the syllable "Win"—Windom, Windrow, Winshore, Winwold. These are men who believe in tempering justice with mercy. Win—without tyranny—without stripping an honest adversary of his dignity—without mocking and denying—without sanctimonious greediness and selfishness—without bias and prejudice—without adding to the hardships of the innocent and helpless.

There is that stark, cold epitaph for the kind of

people who are "prudent and anxious over their little hoards of money or love or power":

"He was a practical man  
Who lived dreamless.  
  
Now he sleeps here  
As he lived—dreamless."

Carl Sandburg has often emphasized the importance of Abraham Lincoln's most powerful words, "We must disenthral ourselves." A thrall, Carl Sandburg explains, was an Anglo-Saxon serf, a man fettered to a certain pattern of life. Abraham Lincoln called upon the country to "think anew, and act anew, to break the bonds of thralldom." It follows that knowledge will help men disenthral themselves. They must know where they came from, the better to learn where they are going. That philosophy is clearly apparent in Carl Sandburg's "Remembrance Rock."

Reading "Remembrance Rock" is an experience to be lived. The reader comes to realize the significance of Judge Windom's message: "When we say a patriot is one who loves his country, what kind of a love do we mean? A love we can throw on a scale and see how much it weighs? A love we can take apart to see how it ticks? . . . we know when a nation goes down and never comes back, when a society or a civilization perishes, one condition may always be found. **THEY FORGOT WHERE THEY CAME FROM.**"

Carl Sandburg has put much of himself and his wide range of experience into "Remembrance Rock." Here we meet references to Elijah again. Remember Spong holds a candle while her father works, just as

"Sholly" held the kerosene lamp for his father. There is mention of a pottery maker; and Hornsby Meadows, it is said, is handy at shoveling silt out of a cistern. To New Era comes an evangelist who is a dead-ringer for the Bunkshooter in "Chicago Poems."

Carl Sandburg, after meeting Marilyn Monroe, said that she isn't what's wrong with the country. In "Remembrance Rock," Omri Winwold says of a friend, "He isn't what's wrong with the country."

"Marilyn Monroe was a lovely girl," Carl Sandburg says. And you remember that Marilyn grew up an orphan, a kitchen slavey, and that she cared enough to read "The Brothers Karamazov" and wanted to play Grushenka in the motion picture; and you know it must have given her some happiness when Carl Sandburg framed a tribute to her.

"Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has the film rights to 'Remembrance Rock.'" Carl Sandburg's voice sounded wistful. "I suppose they'll make the picture sometime—after we both are dead and gone."

There was one possible answer. "It is a lot of book. Maybe they haven't gotten around to reading it yet!"

On film, "Remembrance Rock" would need to be a three- or four-hour spectacular, but it would be a powerful piece of drama to remind Americans where they came from. The clue to possible film treatment is probably on page 1055. In a dream, Raymond Windom sees a book as tall and wide as Hopecrest House, the "big hand and reaching fingers" opening and closing the great book three times.

This is not a "book report." It is only the bare skim-

ming of the surface of a remarkable novel. Written by a singer of songs, it is sometimes lively with melody. Written by a poet, the reader notices phrases like, "A rare and sudden face sacred with both peace and sorrow," and "The house looked anxious. . . . What were the candles in the house seeing?" Written by a philosopher, historian and patriot who loves his fellow-countrymen—whether they read his great novel or not—"Remembrance Rock" is a fascinating chronicle of human emotions. It may stand the test of time better than we may stand the test of the atom bomb—if we are among those "who forgot where they came from."

## Mr. Lincoln's Message

Lincoln collections were becoming a familiar story to Carl Sandburg. On July 26, 1947, at midnight, the Robert T. Lincoln Collection was opened in the Library of Congress. Sandburg became a newspaperman again. He recalls, "The next five days I did my best at reporting in seven newspaper columns for a syndicate what was revealed in the 18,300 letters, telegrams and manuscripts, miscellaneous data. Nothing of major consequence was revealed, but the documents deepened and sharpened the outlines of the massive and subtle Lincoln. . . ."

Carl Sandburg's works were being translated all over the world, and scholarly studies were being published. Of great importance was the fact that he had given Abraham Lincoln to the world, as well as to his own country. Respect for Lincoln inspired respect for the democracy that had produced such a giant among great men.

Although some of Carl Sandburg's poems were more difficult to translate than his prose, working people can understand what "City of Big Shoulders" means in any language.

In 1950, a new edition of "The Songbag" came out. With some of the earlier selections left out, it was more limited "in scope and aim." There is some typical Bing Crosby jocularity opposite the title page in "The New American Songbag": "This here songbag is just loaded with old goodies."

Nineteen-fifty also saw a large, handsome volume coming out of the bindery with the Harcourt, Brace imprint on it. Inside the jacket of Carl Sandburg's "Complete Poems" are the words "Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry." Here was forty years of Sandburg's poetry collected in one neat package, set in type to match the Lincoln volumes. On the jacket is a prime favorite among many fine studies of Sandburg, by Edward Steichen naturally.

In addition to the earlier collections, a new section had been added. Some of these poems had appeared in magazines and newspapers during the years of World War II, and forty of them had not been published previously. It is all Sandburg, stating the facts as he sees them, with his uncompromised, perceptive eye. Speaking lullabies of patriotic tenderness to "faces warblown in a falling rain"—measuring the stumbling progress of The Family of Man toward a world of peace in this unbelievable Nuclear Age—almost whimsical now as he nails the hide of the same old opponent to the wall:

"You are a diller a dollar, I am a ten o'clock  
scholar . . .

We shall always be interfering with each  
other, forever be arguing—you for the  
maggots, me for the moon. . . ."

Sandburg's "vitality plus versatility" are especially apparent in the New Section. Here are "The Man with the Broken Fingers," "Mr. Lincoln and His Boy," and "The Long Shadow of Lincoln: A Litany," which was the Phi Beta Kappa poem at the Mother Chapter of William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1944. There are many poems for the ages, enduring and deathless in a world that Carl Sandburg hopes will persevere in a brotherhood of peace.

Carl Sandburg, this man who had written Abraham Lincoln's biography, was now working on the story of his own life. The first volume, taking him through his childhood and the Puerto Rican campaign and his entrance into college, was hailed by the critics in 1952 with jubilation. It is more than an autobiography; it is the history of an age barely remembered, as it was lived by a boy who never will be forgotten. It is a magnificent slice of human experience.

Robert Sherwood said, "'Always the Young Strangers' is, to me, the best autobiography ever written by an American. I am not forgetting Benjamin Franklin or Henry Adams, nor showing them disrespect. . . ." "Always the Young Strangers" was described in words splendid with sensitivity: "Warmth, true boyish simplicity, dignity, sympathy, and understanding."

Reading about groping, searching young Cully Sandburg may bring thoughts of a stanza in "The People, Yes." If parents sometimes are hurt when their teenagers fling away from them, flaring out, "Stop picking at me! Leave me alone!" these lines are for

them. Carl Sandburg is telling a father to give this advice to his son:

“Tell him solitude is creative if he is strong  
and the final decisions are made in silent rooms.  
Tell him to be different from other people  
if it comes natural and easy being different.  
Let him have lazy days seeking his deeper  
motives.

Let him seek deep for where he is a born natural.

Then he may understand Shakespeare  
and the Wright brothers, Pasteur, Pavlov,  
Michael Farrady and free imaginations  
bringing changes into a world resenting  
change.

He will be lonely enough  
to have time for the work  
he knows as his own.”

Later there was a shorter volume of one hundred and seventy-nine pages, “Prairie Town Boy,” for younger readers. Even though it has been cropped where it was necessary, it is still “Always the Young Strangers,” with the same heart and spirit. The youngster who reads “Prairie Town Boy” will look forward to reading “Always the Young Strangers” when he gets older.

On the eve of his seventy-fifth birthday, President Truman sent a message of congratulations and expressed gratitude to Carl Sandburg for “helping Americans to see their forefathers, their cities, their farms and themselves a little more clearly.”

In 1953, at the age of seventy-five, Carl Sandburg made a sentimental journey back to Galesburg, the

scene of his youth and "Always the Young Strangers." Fourteen hundred enthusiastic townfolk taxed the seating capacity of historic Central Church to hear him, and they could have used another thousand seats. Carl Sandburg always plays to "overflow crowds." Except when he is on TV, too many people have needed to go away disappointed.

A lot of good literature probably goes the way of the wastebasket. Carl Sandburg almost threw away "A Lincoln Preface," a short composition that started with the death of Lincoln and moved backward in time to his election as a Congressman from Illinois. It was to have been an introduction to the Lincoln books, but it wasn't needed. Almost discarded earlier, the "Preface" was published in 1953 as a sixteen-page book.

Nineteen hundred fifty-four was an epic year in the history of the Lincoln books. The six-volume set had become more and more expensive as printing costs went up, and the story of hardworking Honest Abe was being priced out of reach of the very people who could reap the most benefit from having "Mr. Lincoln" in their modest homes.

In the Preface to the one-volume "Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years" and "The War Years," Carl Sandburg says, "I have tried to compress the essential story of Lincoln the Man and President into one volume." This, it may be imagined, would be a devastating labor for an author who loved every word, every detail, that applied to the Great Emancipator.

The result is a well-rounded "distillation," as Carl Sandburg calls it, of the lengthier masterpiece. It

moves with the same measure of human majesty, the same appeal to the heart and senses. The 747 pages, from the Preface through the Sources and Acknowledgements, will attract people of all walks of life as long as time endures. It is not necessary to be a Lincoln researcher or scholar to become engrossed in this biography. It "reads easy." The pages have been cut down, but Lincoln is still as large as life.

In "The New York Herald Tribune," Mark Van Doren said, "In either book, the short one or the long one, we have a Lincoln whom no other man than Carl Sandburg could have given us, and even the short one gives us that man in abundance."

"Commonweal's" John Cournos wrote, "You forget you are reading a book, so obsessed are you with the man he has written about in this long record, from which little is omitted."

A special kind of value is attached to the new, shorter edition of the Lincoln biography. As soon as the wealth of Sandburg material had been published, almost everyone in the writing field—from historical researcher to novelist—suddenly became Lincoln-conscious. Carl Sandburg had opened up an entirely new area of dynamic reference material. He was the one who had realized what a sublimely universal figure Lincoln was, that he added up to something mighty immortal in the history of mankind; and Sandburg searched for more than twenty years to find all the bits and pieces that would portray The Great Emancipator in his full stature. This was a "readable," understanding story of the Civil War giant who could

keep his balance while mists of blood and tempests of passion often swirled about him.

It had been an unprecedeted challenge, and Sandburg met the obligation with such overwhelming success that "everybody wanted to get into the act." Civil War literature had been on the slim side. Carl Sandburg's panoramic contribution changed the literary pattern.

The situation might be compared with that note of humor about an overdose of requiem poems deluging the newspapers during the Vast Pageant of mourning, in the final chapter of Sandburg's "*Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*." Lincoln would appreciate that small bit of comedy, in the midst of the black crepe and wreaths, and the cornering of John Wilkes Booth in that barn near Bowling Green.

When writers saw that they could open Sandburg's Lincoln books almost anywhere and get ideas for further factual research, or inspiration for fictional stories and novels, the flood was on. Book dealers said—and still are saying—that any good book dealing with the Lincoln era can just about be guaranteed to sell.

As painstakingly as Sandburg had covered the field, it was conceivable that the multitude of new researchers might turn up some bits of fresh or conflicting material. Carl Sandburg was grateful for any additional material that would add to the authenticity of the one-volume Lincoln. Some contradictions in the Ann Rutledge story must have caused him a few pangs, however. You read Carl Sandburg and you know he is wise and he's nobody's fool, but he also is

delightfully romantic. Whether the Ann Rutledge story was based on letters from questionable sources or not, it was a beautiful and tender romance; and Carl Sandburg is not the only one who wishes that every word had been true.

In celebration of Sandburg's eightieth birthday, an Exhibit of Materials from Carl Sandburg's Library was placed on display in the University of Illinois on January 6, 1958. In this Sandburg Range collection there is a copy of "Leaves of Grass." On the fly leaf Sandburg salutes Walt Whitman:

"What a lusty, reckless one was this young Walt!" and "What an unaccountable one—and how respectable time has now made him!"

Among the Sandburg Range items is a well-worn copy of the New Webster Dictionary and Complete Vest-Pocket Library. It is inscribed with a message for Carl Sandburg's two grandchildren:

"Dearest Karlen Paula and John Carl—here is a pocket dictionary your Buppong carried from Illinois to Porto Rico and back in 1898—you will find more words in it than you will ever need—I like the verbs better than the nouns which isn't saying you won't find some pretty good and useful nouns in it—

with incalculable bushels of love  
Buppong 1949

(In the novel "Remembrance Rock," grandfather comes out "Buppong" on the lips of a two-year-old grandson.)

In 1957, "Sandburg Range," a large, handsome

brochure, summarized the Sandburg Range exhibit. R. H. Glauber, in *Christian Century* said, "‘Range’ is the right word too. It demonstrates the scope of his mind, the fluidity of his pen and the remarkable grasp he has of the unique genius of this country. Not many authors could survive this kind of scrutiny. Sandburg does it brilliantly."

Carl Sandburg, during a week-long celebration of "Chicago Dynamic," was welcomed back to "the city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive," to read another poem. When he spoke at the Drake Hotel there on October 30, 1957, Sandburg noted that "there were some twenty millions of Americans still living close to the poverty line." But, he pointed out, "the United States has never been a nation to refuse a challenge or bury its head in the past." There was substantial evidence of American prosperity and achievement, he believed.

These were optimistic sentiments from a man who had recorded the rise of American industrial standards, from the lowly sweatshop to the gleaming, air-conditioned factory; from five cents an hour to dollars-plus an hour. Now everybody profits—from the manufacturer who makes the cars and deep-freezes, to the "common workingman" who can afford to buy them.

In 1958, Galesburg celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of the Lincoln-Douglas debate—with Knox College, the Illinois Historical Society, the Civil War Round Table and the Alumni of Lombard College participating. At a gala Centennial banquet sponsored by the Lombard Alumni, Carl Sandburg and Edward Steichen, both past eighty, were the "stars" of the

evening. Herb Graffis, master of ceremonies for the evening, compared Carl Sandburg to "a mountain with snow around the peak and a lot of fire inside."

Attention was bestowed on Edward Steichen, Carl's brother-in-law and "America's foremost photographer," whose picture selections from the 1955 Family of Man exhibit had recently been published, with the Prologue poem and captions by Carl Sandburg.

Fanny Butcher, in the Chicago Sunday Tribune for October 12, 1958, tells about the "witching hour spell" that Carl Sandburg cast over the assembled guests: "It was almost midnight when Sandburg finally got up to talk, to read a few poems, to ask for his guitar for the soft accompaniment to some folk songs, but the audience stayed en masse, captured by his deep sincerity as he read some of what he labeled 'solemn poems' and his tenderness as he intoned 'some that bring laughter to children.' 'One thing the matter with modern poetry,' he said, 'is that so many poets are born old—they seldom write a poem a child could enjoy.' "

There were touches of the great Sandburg whimsy, especially when he sang "a very short song you might say was the outline for a very long novel":

"Papa loved Mama,  
Mama loved Men.  
Mama's in the grave,  
Papa's in the pen."

In 1959 came "Lincoln Collector: The Story of Oliver R. Barrett's Great Private Collection." In the Foreword, Carl Sandburg says from his heart, "Where

would history and biography be unless there were collectors?"

Early in 1959, on the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth, Carl Sandburg became "the first private citizen" to appear before a joint session of Congress, before some distinguished political leaders whose educations had come easy for them and others who had struggled as hard as Carl Sandburg had.

Carl Sandburg's publishers recorded that splendid February 12th in a special edition, noting that it was also a milestone year for Harcourt, Brace. The publishing house was forty years old, and so was their "warm and ever-refreshing relationship with Carl Sandburg." "The Chicago Race Riots" had been on their first list. The Harcourt, Brace editors recalled that Sandburg had been recognized mainly as a poet, so the Abraham Lincoln books came as a surprise to many.

So here was Carl Sandburg, son of a Swedish immigrant father who couldn't write his own name, coming to speak to the powerful and erudite Congress of the United States about a man whose mother could not write her own name—which just about sums up the true ideal of democracy.

In introducing him, the Honorable Sam Rayburn pointed out that Sandburg "in all probability knows more about the life, the times, the hopes and the aspirations of Abraham Lincoln than any other human being. . . ."

The members of Congress arose, applauding the patriot who had given Abraham Lincoln to his countrymen.

Mr. Sandburg, before reading his prepared address, said that the introduction called "for humility rather than pride."

Passages came forth with the nobility of a man who understands Lincoln's language, enriched with the poetry of Sandburg:

"Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on earth who is both steel and velvet, who is as hard as rock and soft as drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect.

"During the four years he was President, he at times, especially in the first three months, took to himself the powers of a dictator. . . . He argued and pleaded for compensated emancipation of the slaves. The slaves were property; they were on the tax books along with horses and cattle, the valuation of each slave next to his name in the tax assessors' books. . . .

"In the mixed shame and blame of the immense wrongs of two crashing civilizations, often with nothing to say, he said nothing, slept not at all, and on occasions was seen to weep in a way that made weeping appropriate, decent, majestic."

Standing before Congress on that day in 1959, Carl Sandburg recalled that Abraham Lincoln felt that education for young blacks, as well as recognition of the Emancipation Proclamation, should be adopted in Louisiana. He advocated the "elective franchise for intelligent Negroes who fought gallantly in the war."

Lincoln, Carl Sandburg reminded his distinguished audience, was unhappy to note the degeneracy of the

phrase, "All men are created equal." Lincoln said, "We now practically read it, 'All men are created equal except Negroes.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all men are created equal except Negroes, foreigners and Catholics.' When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty."

Inside the jacket of "Complete Poems" there is a sentence about Carl Sandburg that continues to be appropriate: "It is no surprise that many are familiar with his tall, snow-haired figure, for he has read and sung his way throughout the United States. Other artists have been frequently inspired to set his verse to music, to dramatize it, to dance to it." In the late spring of 1959, Gene Kelly and Carl Sandburg gave a unique television performance. The Hollywood star danced to Sandburg's Alphabet song, while Carl Sandburg strummed his guitar.

In the late summer of 1959, the great Carl Sandburg and the great Edward Steichen went to the Soviet Union as cultural ambassadors, to open The Family of Man exhibit. Mr. Steichen, as Photography Director of New York's Museum of Modern Art, had started work on the exhibit early in the 1950's, traveling in eleven countries, searching out photographers, combing through books and magazines for the pictorial heartbeat of mankind. Of the two million pictures collected, five hundred and three were chosen. The Family of Man, an exhibition depicting the common brotherhood of humanity in scenes of everyday life — loving, weeping, praying, grieving, dancing, laughing, fighting in wars, comforting children—was

opened at the New York Museum of Modern Art on January 26, 1955. That year it was shown in six American cities, starting on its world tour.

There is comradeship and mutual admiration between Carl Sandburg and his brother-in-law, and they would enjoy that Family of Man journey abroad in 1959. Edward Steichen had been born one of the "haves-nots" too, a farm boy with immigrant parents, not even finishing high school. He started out as an artist and supported himself by painting while he experimented with photography—contradictory as that story sounds. This is a spectacular modern world, where anything can happen to a couple of talented fellows like Sandburg and Steichen!

On the way home from Russia in 1959, Carl Sandburg accepted an invitation to visit a cousin named Erik Carlsson, whom he had only recently learned about. He found several more cousins in his parents' old home villages in Sweden. At the age of 81, his mother's old Swedish tales about the "hemlandet" were coming alive for Carl. He was glad he remembered enough Swedish so he could talk a bit and sing some of the old folksongs. While he was in Sweden, King Gustav Adolf presented Sandburg with a special medal for his accomplishments in the fine arts, the Prime Minister gave a formal dinner for him, Uppsala University awarded that doctorate to him, and the crowds loved him at the Swedish-American Day celebration on August 6.

Carl Sandburg, aged eighty-two in 1960, was busy on Broadway, in Hollywood, and was doing the usual amount of dashing around to make TV and personal

appearances. A successful production on Broadway during the 1960 theater season was based on "The People, Yes"; Bette Davis headed the cast of "The World of Carl Sandburg," an evening of Sandburg recitations.

In July, 1960, Carl Sandburg was asked to act as a "creative consultant" on the motion picture production of "The Greatest Story Ever Told." You remember that early poem, "The Bunkshooter," and you realize that Carl Sandburg has always known "this Jesus" and what He means to humanity.

Carl Sandburg worked closely with producer George Stevens on the picture script, but he only says laconically, "I understand my name will be on the list of credits." The Sandburg Association would like to have the premiere of "The Greatest Story Ever Told" in Galesburg.

In "Lives of the Poets," Louis Untermeyer says: "More volubly than any poet since Whitman, Sandburg ranged over the United States . . ." His searching mind was still ranging astutely in the 1960 book of "Harvest Poems." Some of them were from his earlier "Complete Poems." In the section entitled "New Poems," he joins many great modern minds in new cautions against materialism:

"If you get enough money  
you can buy anything  
except . . . you got to die."

There is a penetrating evaluation of Sandburg's work, by Mark Van Doren, in the 1960 edition of "Harvest Poems," and Sandburg adds some eloquent "Notes for a Preface."

In "Now They Bury Her Again," Sandburg muses on the immortality of poetry:

"Poetry is dead? So they say . . .  
Always in each passing and phantom age  
they give her short shrift and a new burial."

Another choice Harcourt, Brace and World publication in 1960 was "Wind Song," a Sandburg collection of poems most suited to children. There are old favorites like "Little Girl, Be Careful What You Say," and new ones like "Fourth of July Night":

"Now a shower of Chinese  
fire alphabets,  
a cry of flower pots  
broken in flames . . ."

There are the "two bubbles who found they had rainbows on their curves." There are special verses for that special occasion on TV, "Lines Written for Gene Kelly to Dance to"—the Alphabet song with tip-tapping accents on geography, history, punctuation and multiplication.

At the front of "Wind Song," the poet has penned a charming greeting that begins "Dear Young Folks," with a printed autograph in Carl Sandburg's own handwriting. The book is dedicated to the Sandburg grandchildren, John Carl and Karlen Paula.

Carl Sandburg's recordings, through the years, would take up a respectable amount of space in a record cabinet. The versatility of his "vocal range" is demonstrated in long-playing records featuring the reading of his poetry, the singing of selections from

"The Songbag," readings from Lincoln and The Root-abaga Stories, and informal conversations and song-fests.

The greatest living authority on Abraham Lincoln took the nation to the scene of a mighty battle on CBS Reports in 1961. The feature show, called "Carl Sandburg at Gettysburg," won high commendations.

In late 1961, Harcourt, Brace and World published "The World of Carl Sandburg," the dramatic performance that had appeared on Broadway the year before. The book features running discussions between playwright Norman Corwin and Carl Sandburg on the pages opposite the text.

## Chapter Twenty

# To Dwell in Many Places

It is given to few men to see their spirits dwelling in a multitude of places while they are still very much alive! This is the miracle of Carl Sandburg. His books are on the shelves of libraries and homes all over the world, and that is to be expected. Millions of Americans have heard him speak his poems and sing to the rhythm of his guitar, in auditoriums and concert halls and on TV and radio. This is not unusual because he is a people-lover who attracts people to him.

Aside from the home where he lives in person, Carl Sandburg is more completely “present” in the small Birthplace in Galesburg, Illinois, than anywhere else. Here is the warm abiding-place of his homespun philosophy. In a Peoria Journal Star folder, credit is given to Mrs. Adda George for the “restraint and good judgment” apparent in the restoration of the cottage where August and Clara Sandburg’s first son was born. “She wished to give the impression that it was a home and not a museum.”

When the Birthplace was dedicated in 1946, two of Carl’s sisters were there. Mary Sandburg Johnson

came from California for the occasion. Esther Sandburg Wachs traveled from her home in Gibson City, Illinois. In their minds must have been many vivid memories of Clara and August Sandburg, and the family growing up in Galesburg.

Just inside the entrance to the small house is that salute from Carl's beloved Stephen Vincent Benet:

"He came to us from the people whom Lincoln loved because there were so many of them, and through all his life, in verse and prose, he has spoken of and for the people. A great American, we have just reason to be proud that he has lived and written in our time."

And what of the man with the tall silk hat and the knitted shawl around his shoulders? He and Carl Sandburg share the small home as kindred spirits, enjoying mutual remembrances and sympathies.

Abraham Lincoln's room is at the back. One of the later tenants had built an addition that was used as a storeroom until the Illinois legislature financed its remodeling. In the Lincoln room, the books that have kindled the Lincoln flame and kept it burning are on the shelf to the left of the mantel—if you are standing in the room as a visitor. If you are Abraham Lincoln, gazing out from Wyeth's "open sky" portrait above the fireplace, the books naturally are to the right of you. Skilled workmanship has gone into the knotty pine walls. The fireplace and chimney are fashioned of homemade bricks with the stamp of history on them. They were once part of a Galesburg home which was a station along the Underground Railway.

A wedding present that Abraham Lincoln gave to some friends has come back to keep his memory company—which only shows that you should be careful when you shop for presents, in case you get famous. In 1831, Abraham Lincoln gave a wedding present to his New Salem friends, Elizabeth Burner and Isaac Gulliher. Generous descendants of the Gullihers have donated the lovely platter and the pitcher to the Lincoln Room at the Sandburg Birthplace. A genuine iron “grease lamp,” which was given to the Samuel Mains by the Lincolns when they left Indiana for Illinois, has also found its way back to a very notable member of the family.

The Lincoln Room has period furnishings. Visitors sign their names in a guest book on an old pine desk from the Bishop Hill Swedish settlement. On top of the desk is a model of an old prairie schooner, complete with a pair of oxen, by Ernest Elmo Calkins. Suspended against the wall above the desk is a rifle from covered-wagon days. Among the many noteworthy items hanging in the room is a gift from Oliver R. Barrett's Lincoln collection—an 1863 call for additional troops from Massachusetts, signed by the Civil War President.

The cottage is a valuable storehouse of “Lincolniана and Sandburgiana,” to put it the way the scholars do. There are Lincoln belongings and Sandburg belongings. All of Carl Sandburg's books are in the library room, keeping company with the typewriter on which he wrote “The Prairie Years.” There are copies of those rare collector's items, the three small books of poems that were published in 1904 and 1905 in Pro-

fessor Wright's basement. There are samples of Carl Sandburg's writing hanging on the wall.

Tourists at the cottage are treated to "sound-effects," as well as visual details. The latest recordings received at the Sandburg Birthplace are: "The Rootabaga Stories"; "A Lincoln Album," with Carl Sandburg narrating "The Man in the White House" and "A. Lincoln—Springfield, Illinois," by Caedman Records; and an album of popular ballads, "The Great Carl Sandburg," by Lyrichord Discs.

No admission fees are charged at the Sandburg Birthplace, but it is supported by donations from Carl Sandburg's admirers of all ages. On the wall is a panel listing the names of Life Members and Sustaining Members.

Sometimes you become a Sustaining Member by accident. If you are "researching" Carl Sandburg for a biography, you might think of the Sandburg Birthplace as a good source of information. You write a letter, enclosing a few dollars to cover expenses and provide a donation to the cause.

You are delighted to receive a large manila envelope with a bonanza of choice Sandburg material inside. There is also a gracious letter from Mrs. L. W. Goff. She and her husband are the "official greeters" at the Birthplace when it is open to the public on Sundays and at times when special tours are arranged. Mrs. Goff extends an invitation to visit Galesburg, and she encloses a Sustaining Membership card with your name on it, and you feel mighty honored. Mr. and Mrs. Goff are such enthusiastic hosts that young

children have been known to ask them, "Are you Mr. Sandburg's father and mother?"

The Penny Parades, on Carl Sandburg's birthday each January, have become a jolly custom in Galesburg. In 1962, the deluge almost got out of hand, according to a report from the Sandburg Birthplace Association. "The treasurer of the Association and his helpers had not reckoned with the possible weight of 43,335 pennies, and a police car was dispatched to take the collection to the bank. Pillow cases and baskets were solicited from the neighbors. . . ." The pennies finally got to the bank, and the Galesburg public and parochial school children were credited with donating \$433.35 for the preservation of Carl Sandburg's birthplace.

Carl Sandburg is a legend in Galesburg—a living legend. When "Always the Young Strangers" was published, the people of Galesburg must have been astonished to discover that Carl Sandburg, at seventy-five, still had such vivid recollections of those childhood and boyhood years at 331 East Third and 622-624 Berrien Street.

The widespread cherishing of Carl Sandburg knows no limits. Twelve schools have already been named for him. They are located in Orland Park, Mundelein, Joliet, Elmhurst, Harvey, Wheeling and Springfield, Illinois; in Levittown, Pennsylvania; in Golden Valley, Minnesota; in Pontiac and Drayton Plains, Michigan; and San Bruno, California. How can we measure these priceless memorials of devotion to Carl Sandburg? In the happy, skipping minutes of recess, with children calling back and forth? In the school library where the

heads of youngsters are bowed over copies of "The Rootabaga Stories," "Prairie Town Boy" or "Abe Lincoln Grows Up"? Young Carl Sandburg enjoyed both reading and recess.

The Carl Sandburg High School at Orland Park, Illinois, dedicated the 1955 annual to "the portrayal of the most memorable event of the year, the dedication. A thunderous ovation greeted Carl Sandburg, the guest speaker, as he walked across the stage to begin a talk that has lingered in the memory of every student."

Lovely Mrs. Gail Bakken, who is president of the Minnesota Branch of the League of American Pen Women, remembers the day that Carl Sandburg came to Independent School District Number 281 in Golden Valley, Minnesota, for the dedication of the Carl Sandburg Junior High School. She writes, "I'll never forget the attitude of reverence he inspired among the parents, teachers and children who heard him speak at a Sunday afternoon dedication ceremony. It was like being in church."

In her news story for the Brooklyn Center Press, Gail Bakken elaborated on the way the hearts of the people in the district went out to their distinguished guest from Flat Rock, North Carolina. "Three thousand people had come to the school that afternoon. Only about 2,100 had been admitted to the auditorium . . . admission was limited. . . . The ninth grade band played the Carl Sandburg March, composed specifically for the occasion."

Of Carl Sandburg's dedicatory address, Mrs. Bakken wrote, "He referred to the school . . . as an 'elab-

orate and intricate structure.' The school, however, in spite of its newness and impressive appearance, has three serious rivals, according to Sandburg. Movies, radio, and TV. . . .

"TV commercials especially suffered their share of Sandburg scorn. TV and radio, according to Sandburg, aim at the subconscious in you. 'They aim at your blood rather than your brain. . . .'

"Referring to Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and other great historical figures, he stated that 'more than all else they had loneliness, and knew what to do with it. They knew the value of creative solitude.' "

Of poetry, Sandburg said, "Poets today are indifferent to the great human causes which in the past people have been willing to die for."

Marilyn Silberman, editor of the Robbinsdale High School paper at that time, said in her interview story about Carl Sandburg: "'Crusty' was the word the papers used to describe him. But the white-haired gentleman who stood before some 2,000 people was far from crusty. Rugged, yes . . . gruff at moments, but underneath it all was a glow of warmth and humor."

In addition to the dedicatory address on Sunday afternoon, January 17, 1960, Mr. Sandburg graciously consented to stay over and talk to the junior high students on Monday. Even though he was suffering from a cold, Carl Sandburg warmed the hearts of Minnesota youngsters as he sang ballads to his "gittar" rhythms, read poetry, and quoted from Abraham Lincoln.

These were his parting words to the junior high students: "I am going to close with two statements. One, I have to catch a three o'clock plane; two, I love every one of you."

In addition to the unforgettable memories he left behind him at the Carl Sandburg Junior High School in Golden Valley, there is a bronze plaque in the hallway inscribed with Sandburgian quotations:

"Old and tarnished sayings have it, 'Time is a great teacher' and 'Time will tell.'

"This building as a tool and an instrument, as a breathing structure newly come to life, might speak for itself today and say, 'I am a child of Time. I celebrate the dignity, importance and pathos of Time. Loving hands and thoughtful hearts have seen my foundations and walls rise to serve as best they may a young generation living in a time of world storm. Here to my rooms will come fresh generations, one after another, gazing out on the world in history, gazing in on themselves in reveries, some asking the ancient questions, 'While we live, what is worth looking at, what is worth listening to, and what might be worth dying for?'"'

"Here they may study the guarded meaning of Lincoln opening his House Divided Speech: 'If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it.'

"Always the path of American destiny has been into the unknown. With each new test and crisis it always cost and there were those ready to pay the cost as an affirming character in 'Remembrance

Rock' says: 'Man is a changer. God made him a changer.' You may become witnesses of the finest and brightest era known to Mankind. The nations over the globe shall have music, music instead of murder. It is possible. That is my hope and prayer—for you and for the nations."

Golden words for a Golden Valley School!

You think of the youngsters at that Minnesota school, pausing to read the plaque with Carl Sandburg's statement of faith on it. The years recede in your mind, and you envision a young Galesburg boy, pausing on the way to the milk barn, to read the words of Abraham Lincoln on a plaque at Old Main on Knox College campus.

To think of Carl Sandburg schools, now, is to be reminded of that small group of "radicals," back around 1910, who were drafting "socialistic" legislation for free textbooks in the public schools in Wisconsin. What was the world coming to!

The poet, Lincoln biographer and "wandering troubadour," who didn't quite finish getting his bachelor's degree at Lombard College, has a fairly respectable number of honorary degrees from universities and colleges in the United States and foreign countries. The latest, which was the thirty-fourth, was a Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the University of California. Carl Sandburg takes an equal amount of pride in the championship certificates that Mrs. Sandburg's beautiful, productive goats have been awarded.

Sandburg's name is listed with the great American poets in the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has received the American Arts and Letters Gold

Medal for History and Biography, the Poetry Society of America's Gold Medal for distinguished achievement, and the Boston Arts Festival Award for his contribution to the art of American poetry.

Carl Sandburg has always been gracious about writing introductions, forewords, and biographical chapters for books that have special significance for him. Because of his high regard for President John F. Kennedy, he was happy to write a foreword to a book of his speeches. He has made some admiring remarks about the President on numerous occasions: "He has style and content and the gleams of a great historical figure in his utterance." "He's going to rate as one of the great presidents. It started with an inaugural address like a psalm. . . ."

Sandburg has his own refreshing style of expression, and sometimes it doesn't conform to the "pattern." He had to do some editing on an introduction to a Walt Whitman collection for Modern Library in 1920. It seemed that his affectionate references to "the hairy old galoot" were not considered quite appropriate for a formal appraisal of Whitman—who wasn't formal at all.

Even the smaller libraries around the country have a goodly number of Sandburg books on their shelves. There are collections of Sandburgiana in Illinois and South Carolina, and in widespread places where Sandburg studies have been undertaken.

Then there is the Library of Congress where his words are preserved in the manuscript and microreading departments, the general reading room, the Rare Book Division. You are going to write a biography

about Carl Sandburg? This is an adventure, if you are a stranger at the Library of Congress. You won't feel like a stranger for very long. You say the name "Carl Sandburg" to a librarian and he says, "Oh, his daughter Helga used to be with us here!" Helga? You think of that poem in "Smoke and Steel":

"... she will be  
A grandmother feeding geese on frosty  
Mornings; she will understand  
Early snow on the cranberries  
Better and better then."

Helga, the youngest Sandburg daughter, is now Mrs. Arthur D. Golby of Washington, D. C. The author of three novels, she is not yet "a grandmother feeding geese." The Golby son, John Carl, is twenty-one years old; the daughter, Karlen Paula, is nineteen; and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Sandburg of Connemara Farm are very proud grandparents.

You are still in the Library of Congress, and you go to the files back of the big reading room to see what is indexed under "Sandburg, Carl A." The cards seem to stretch into infinity in the file drawer, and many of them are marked "Rare Book Division." Those would be the collectors' items—copies of limited editions and valuable publications that are no longer in print, mementos of years almost beyond recall. You take down the index numbers for those you know you will want to see—"In Reckless Ecstasy," "The Chicago Race Riots," "The Sandburg Range," "Lincoln Collector," and pamphlets and miscellaneous material. It would be as gigantic a task to assemble all that ma-

terial and write the complete Sandburg biography as it was to write the massive Lincoln biography.

The Rare Book Division is on the second floor. The magnificent bronze doors slow the footsteps of the awed researcher, and it is possible to obtain some curiosity-satisfying literature about them: "They were designed to portray themes appropriate to an institution which houses a vast accumulation of the knowledge that man has recorded over many centuries." There are six panels on the two doors, each panel featuring the "artistically wrought" names or devices of eminent printers and book designers, starting with "Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer who were associates of Johann Gutenberg in introducing printing to the Western World." When the great, emblem-emblazoned bronze doors are locked at night, the valuable "treasures of the mind" within the Rare Book Division are safeguarded as though they were in a bank vault.

In the daytime, the inner, soundproof doors swing open easily. That is only the first step. Inside, genial Mr. Tracy Dunn is the guardian of the portals beyond the thick velvet ropes, and you must be properly identified and fill out forms stating your scholarly business. The name "Carl Sandburg" is magic here too.

"Mr. Sandburg comes around every now and then," Mr. Dunn says, his voice full of devotion; and later you will discover that Mr. Dunn has written several moving pieces of poetry himself. Mr. Dunn hasn't had much of a chance to talk to Carl Sandburg. "He always has such a retinue around him when he comes to visit," Mr. Dunn says wistfully.

Your application processed, you go over to sign

the register. Glancing up the page, you are momentarily startled at the company you are keeping. Someone from Harvard is working on a graduate thesis. A nun from one of the universities is gathering material for a report, a number of other people are writing books, and the names of some famed educational institutions leap out at you. Telling yourself to stop being nosey, you sign the register and pass into the sanctum sanctorum, trying to be as unobtrusive as possible in this room where so much gray matter is teeming with erudite thoughts.

A researcher could spend his happy life in the Rare Book Division and never begin to tap that font of knowledge.

Looking back, you remember the feeling of respectful humility with which you touched that original copy of "In Reckless Ecstasy." You remember the gentle hush at the long desks in the Rare Book Reading Room, a communion of "gropers and seekers" gathered together to think—each his separate thoughts—remote and removed in time and presence from the clamor of the world outside.

You know that the Rare Book staff would be considerate under any circumstances, but if there is an extra measure of kindness, you feel that it's because you're "working" on Carl Sandburg, everybody's hero.

There are the complacent Mr. Frederick Goff, keeping a "Directoral" eye on the Rare Book Division without fussing about it, cheerful Mr. Dunn, and the other unruffled, affable people who make certain that everyone gets the material he needs with no super-charging of the ivory tower atmosphere. There is friendly

little "Bobbie" Chadbourne who supplied that material about the bronze doors and later extended an invitation to lunch at the Supreme Court Building across the street. And, going through those noble halls with Mrs. Chadbourne, you remember that Carl Sandburg thinks highly of several of the present Supreme Court Justices—those who are fighting the hardest for freedom, dignity and equality for all men.

Wherever you go in Washington, you get your mind tangled up with two inseparable men, Abraham Lincoln and Carl Sandburg. Carl Sandburg has walked the old years in Abraham Lincoln's footsteps here. Finishing touches were being put on the Capitol during the Civil War, even "the heroic (bronze) figure of a helmeted woman representing Armed Freedom" being hoisted into position on the great dome. Carl Sandburg has studied the White House to visualize how it must have looked to President Lincoln and his family, and to the visitors who crowded the reception hall with war-time errands of mercy or requests for political favors.

Ford's Theater and the Peterson house are re-visited if you have read "The War Years." There is a deep awareness of the Capital City in Carl Sandburg's poems and his long novel. He has taken the solid consciousness of security inspired by those monumental buildings in Washington and put it into "Remembrance Rock."

It was getting into the fall of 1962. One day there was another researching trip to the Rare Book Division of the Library of Congress, and a peculiar conversation took place.

Mr. Dunn asked, "Well, how is the Sandburg book coming?"

I answered breathlessly, "It's moving along. Have you seen Mr. Sandburg lately?"

"No, he hasn't been here for awhile."

"Well, I hope he won't come today. My publisher has arranged for me to interview him at Flat Rock, North Carolina—and if I should run into him by accident here, I wouldn't have such a good excuse to see him in his natural habitat!"

Mr. Dunn nodded, remembering that "retinue." He took a vicarious pleasure in the news. Nobody is surprised to hear that a writer is anxious to travel hundreds of miles to interview just one man—not if that man is Carl Sandburg.

### Mr. Lincoln's Carl Sandburg

If a Sandburg biographer is not a world-famous newspaper editor and best-selling author like Mr. Harry Golden, she may feel reluctant to refer to herself in the first person very often. Sometimes it comes more natural to say "you." That is one way to bring the reader into closer contact with Carl Sandburg and his story, to let him in on all the experiences that loom large in a project of this type. If "you" should never be scheduled to travel southward over "the top of the world" to interview Carl Sandburg in person, this is an act of sharing the journey. That is the purpose of books—to take readers to places they may never see for themselves.

Mentally, you should be aware of the historical significance of your home locality. If it is Winchester, in northern Virginia, you know that George Washington surveyed land for Lord Fairfax here and that his small surveying office still exists in the heart of the charming little city. You know where General "Stonewall" Jackson's and General Phil Sheridan's headquarters are—you almost take them for granted now. If you pause to think, you realize that you may be walking on

hallowed ground, once bloody with Civil War battles and skirmishes. Nearly three thousand soldiers who wore the Gray, and forty-five hundred who wore the Blue, sleep "the long sleep" in two cemeteries in Winchester. And you remember that Patriot Carl Sandburg often says we must not forget the past, nor the part that was played by those who died for the sake of the American Dream.

This is Daniel Boone's country you are heading into as you drive southward. This is country in which the War-Between-the-States was fought in the high lands and in the valleys.

You have allowed time to stop at the Natural Bridge, even though you figure it's probably just one of those overly-advertised tourist attractions. Suddenly you stroll around a bend at the park, and you gasp to see this honestly-spectacular miracle of nature towering above you. And there is the place where George Washington carved his initials when he was surveying the countryside for Lord Fairfax! At one time, Thomas Jefferson owned the land on which the bridge stands and you remember that you have planned to drive around to Charlottesville on the way home and see Monticello. This will be a pilgrimage into American history in which Carl Sandburg has been deeply involved.

It rains all night at Roanoke, and it is still raining when the car climbs up into the Blue Ridge Parkway in the morning. Then the sun burns through the gray mist, and the clouds billow in mother-of-pearl layers, trapped in the valleys and chasms thousands of feet below.

You are high in the land of the hemlock, pine, red spruce and balsam fir, washed rich-green by the night's rain. You remind yourself to swallow, to yawn at intervals, as your eardrums feel the lofty elevation.

I had planned to have enough time, for once, time to think. When I wanted to stop at an Overlook, I stopped. As I was gazing into the distance at Stone Mountain, a lady from another car looked quizzically at me and asked, "Are you traveling all alone?"

I didn't feel the slightest bit on the defensive, standing there in a state of solitary bliss. "If I weren't alone, I'd have run out of adjectives long ago!" I admitted that I kept wishing I could share these scenic wonders with my family and friends. "But," I grinned happily, "someone would be sure to say, 'If you've seen one mountain, you've seen them all' or they might be impatient with the very slow speed limit and the sharp curves!"

The fellow-traveler-well-met nodded, laughing. "I think you've got something there!"

You go your way, feeling buoyant, thinking ahead —to Asheville, Hendersonville, and the great man at Flat Rock.

You think about this man with some nonconformist ideas, this radical, this man who can't be bought, this poet who refuses to be anyone's yes-man even though drifting with the tide is so comfortable.

You think of people who like to call themselves radicals, convinced that it has something to do with kicking over the traces, sneering at moral values, insisting that "the world owes me a living, and I'm gonna

get it." Now, this "radical" Carl Sandburg has lived all his life with the same lady he married in 1908, but he only gets fifty-percent credit for that because it takes two to make a marriage work. Does he think the world owes him a living? He agrees with the letter that Lincoln wrote to one of his "borrowing" relatives, chiding him for being foolish about money. All of his biographers have noted Carl Sandburg's honesty, his lack of interest in pretentious living. He started working "like a horse" when he was a youngster, and he is still working—a poet and autobiographer at the age of four score and five. And he probably helps Mrs. Sandburg and the girls with the goats sometimes.

Carl Sandburg loves those goats, and he calculates he has kept his vigor by drinking their milk regularly. In "Friends Magazine" for August, 1960, he fondled some of his pets as he told a magazine writer, "Look at them, how white they keep themselves, how clean."

From the tone of Carl Sandburg's sentiments, everyone knows there are close bonds of affection in the Sandburg family. Helga's two older sisters, Margaret and Janet, are still "home girls" at Connemara Farm, helping with their father's reference files and writing projects, and taking care of the Sandburg goats and farm duties. Janet likes to follow the sports pages. All four of the "Sandburg girls" like to think of themselves as farmers. It was Helga who wanted the cow in the first place, and she is "at home" on the farm in her books.

There is supposed to be something highly radical about being an intellectual, and you start to think of Carl Sandburg in those terms. "Intellectuals" are won-

derful—they have the most complex, the most human minds, in the world. They come in all shapes and sizes, from half-baked to morbidly scholarly. No matter what they do for a living, they always read and generally write. They also think. You usually can identify an intellectual by his reactions. After that St. John's-Eastern football riot in Washington, D. C. on a recent Thanksgiving Day, most people were either clucking or wailing, "See, that's what happens when they let those people have 'equality!'"

What will the intellectual say? He'll probably say, with a lift of the eyebrow, "Yes, it sounded almost as bad as one of those lynching mobs, didn't it? It's too bad some Negroes have to act uncivilized right now when they have so much at stake." This is one reason why intellectuals are not always popular in polite society.

Intellectuals usually present a solid front on the subject of censorship. The freedom of expression is one of the basic freedoms. They strike rigid attitudes, sometimes almost bending over backward in their zeal. How about Carl Sandburg?

When he went to open the superb Civil War exhibit at the Library of Congress on October 25, 1961, he held "the craziest press conference he'd ever seen," according to Washington Post reporter M. D. Rosenberg. With reporters trooping after him, downstairs and upstairs in the Library of Congress, Sandburg made strong statements on a number of topics. His original observation was for the press: "They can ask enough questions in ten minutes to get a man in trouble for his whole life."

Carl Sandburg had compliments a-plenty for President Kennedy, with whom he visited that day. Of Khrushchev he said, "We've never known the tragedy of war as the Russians have. . . . Sometimes I think a man of peasant blood . . . has a sense of humor. There's a peasant heart there—I think he knows the next war will bring more disaster to Russia . . ." And you remember that Sandburg is a man who looks at the overall picture of history.

Fallout? At eighty-four, he felt he had had his life, but he talked about his grandchildren. "There are people I love. I worry about fallout for them."

Then came the question about censorship. "What does he think of Henry Miller's 'Tropic of Cancer'?"

"You couldn't print my answer. . . . That feller was sick or something when he wrote that book. . . . Those who want the \$7.95 edition, let 'em have it." It was the cheap paperback edition that bothered him because children could buy it too easily. "I read about a third of the book . . . a damfool crazy thing."

You recall your reaction to that paragraph when you had read it more than a year ago before you knew you would be writing Carl Sandburg's biography. Oh, to be such a mellowed intellectual that you would dare to make a statement like that without feeling as though you might lose your "literary license!" Carl Sandburg does not believe in censorship, but he has always encouraged worthwhile reading around his house.

In Mr. Rosenberg's information-filled feature there was a question about Mr. Sandburg's health. It

was answered in typical Sandburg style, "I'm amazed from day to day that I am ambulant and in my right mind."

After Mr. Sandburg had gone, Mr. Rosenberg and the other reporters scanned the text of the Civil War Address that Carl Sandburg would deliver on the evening of October 25, 1961. These paragraphs would be part of the grande finale:

"If there is a Valhalla conceivable, then we may picture in imagination the hands of Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee clasped and shaken in contemplation of the power of the United States of America in the present world struggle.

". . . Love stands and hangs by an arch. The rainbow is an arch. Hate and pride are arches. Love and understanding build unbreakable arches."

These are appealing thoughts for the lone driver to ponder, high in the grandeur of the Blue Ridge Parkway of southern Virginia. Here the mountains reach the peak of majesty—craggy, heavily wooded, wanton with scenic glory. Intoxicated with hundreds of miles of "food for the soul," you start humming even though you can't carry a tune for sour apples. Who can hear you? You have seen the Rockies too, and it strikes you that God must be a "liberal" to be so extravagant with so much beauty in this one great country.

Now you have crossed the border into North Carolina; and the Smokies, dark and handsome, are doing sentinel duty with the Blue Ridge chain. On the way to Asheville, you wonder why Thomas Wolfe wrote so little about these overpowering, overwhelming heights of breathless magnificence since this was the country

of his youth. There are biographers who suspect that he felt hemmed in by them. You want to visit his grave, but it is getting into mid-afternoon as you take a steep, twisting old road down into Asheville. You are "a stranger in these parts," and it would be wise to find Hendersonville or Flat Rock and a bed for the night. Tomorrow you hope to see Carl Sandburg.

You will pay a literary pilgrimage to Thomas Wolfe's grave on the way back. Thomas Wolfe—mountains or no mountains, he climbed stupendous heights of rhetoric! Surely he would have been a Nobel winner if he had lived beyond the age of thirty-seven.

You are one of the people who strongly favors Carl Sandburg for the Nobel Award. No—not just Carl Sandburg. There would be someone else there with him. A black-suited tall man in a tall hat—not a phantom, but a great human being whom Carl Sandburg has ushered out of the shadows of the past and into distinct reality, as big as life, as great as the American Dream. If Abraham Lincoln ever deserved a Nobel Prize for his ageless utterances, he and Carl Sandburg should share it, just as they have shared so many qualities of "the common man" in this amazing country of ours.

In the field of poetry—aside from his massive Lincoln biography—Carl Sandburg is highly eligible for that Nobel Award. There is something universal about a poet who speaks for The People, not for one certain region or one area of philosophy. Carl Sandburg cried in verse for justice and freedom and human dignity for the people, and he was deeply involved in the attainment of a better life for all Americans. In one way or

another, he will be contributing to the forward march of civilization all over the world. His poetry not only strides powerfully—there is a comforting depth of understanding for all of storm-tossed humanity in it.

Then there is his mighty novel, "Remembrance Rock," sparkling with patriotic glory and deep inspiration, destined to warm the hearts of Americans and portray for the world the spirit of democracy in transition toward the great ideal.

It seems almost too much to point out that this one man has been active in a good many other literary and art fields, including children's literature and the preservation of folksongs, both American and imported.

You turn off your "thinking machine" and concentrate on the super-highway running along the southern outskirts of Asheville. Everybody else is zooming past, knowing where he is going. Finally the sign for the Hendersonville cloverleaf appears ahead. Here is where you "take a right" to the north and end up headed south. "Take a right?"—slang is forever!

The road to Hendersonville runs for about twenty miles through a level valley framed by distant mountains. At first glance, Hendersonville seems studded with restaurants, motels and tourist homes, all brightly illuminated. You don't know whether you're in Hendersonville or Flat Rock. Safely settled in a motel for the next two nights, you learn that the Flat Rock Playhouse and Carl Sandburg's house are about two miles down the road.

People were still talking about the benefit performance that Carl Sandburg and Harry Golden had

staged at the Flat Rock Playhouse a few weeks before. Five hundred people crowded the Playhouse beyond capacity, with hundreds more overflowing into the yard in front. Carl Sandburg held the audience spell-bound for an hour and a half, reading many poems and singing a bit while he strummed his guitar. Mr. Harry Golden, editor of the Carolina Israelite, and Sandburg biographer and cherished friend, said that night, "The greatest thing in the world is dignity. . . . Sandburg understands this."

It is evident that tourists are one of the main industries in Hendersonville and Flat Rock. There are many scenic attractions in the vicinity, and I wondered if Carl Sandburg was supposed to be one of them. I discovered by listening to the answers of some of the local citizens at filling stations and motels, that Carl Sandburg is regarded with a sort of "protective reverence."

The people of the Hendersonville and Flat Rock communities think that tourists should be satisfied to know that Carl Sandburg lives in "that big white house" where maybe you can see some goats grazing in the green acreage. They realize that a man can't be a "scenic attraction" and a writer at the same time, and they disapprove of the sort of tourists who will try to intrude on Mr. Sandburg's privacy just for the sake of being able to say that they saw him—not because they have ever bothered to read anything he has written. He is one of the "sights" to them, and if anyone would mention "Remembrance Rock" they would prick up their ears and ask, "Where's that? Let's drive around and see it before supper."

Carl Sandburg is a gentle person about talking to people occasionally. But when it comes to expecting a hard working author to be on perpetual exhibition, it would be far, far better for tourists to go and see Chimney Rock or Natural Bridge. They neither spin words, nor gather into books. They cannot be interrupted in the middle of a sentence, in the middle of a thought. Sandburg-seekers might spend some of their vacation time looking for Sandburg in his books. Carl Sandburg remembers the days when most people didn't get vacations.

The citizens of Carl Sandburg's home community feel that a biographer has a legitimate excuse to bother Mr. Sandburg, if she's been invited. They say it must be wonderful; some of them have lived there for years without glimpsing the famous poet and Lincoln biographer. If you have had to struggle for most of your own writing and thinking time, you appreciate their thoughtful regard for an industrious author who still has much to say on the eve of his eighty-fifth birthday. You assure these Sandburg-protectors that you won't bother him for long; you've already grown to know him well in the wonderful world of his books. Hero-worshipper that you are, you've even brought along several large volumes for him to autograph!

Exploring the friendly disposition of the community—exploring the sunny, scenic by-lanes—these will help you to know the environment in which Carl Sandburg continues to write. You spend the morning "getting lost" around Flat Rock. You turn off the highway, and there is the Flat Rock Playhouse; and you picture how it must have looked when Carl Sandburg and

Harry Golden played to that overflow crowd. You don't know, at that moment, that Connemara Farm—the Sandburg home property—is right up one of the wooded driveways across the road. Later you will wish you had located it, absolutely and positively, that morning!

But, there are winding lanes ahead to tempt the driver, and one of them goes up, up, past a deserted summer camp for girls. The sign says Ton-a-Wanda, but there's almost no place to ton-a-wanda on that narrow road so you keep going awhile longer. Coming back down, you picture the forsaken buildings and playgrounds teeming with young people, echoing with the shouts and laughter of girls who are now back in school because it is September.

From the Flat Rock ramble, you drive into downtown Hendersonville for lunch. Hendersonville is famous for a number of things, including an angel from the monument shop of Thomas Wolfe's father, keeping watch over a grave in Oakdale Cemetery there. It brings to mind one of the last paragraphs in "Look Homeward Angel":

"And the angels on Gant's porch were frozen in hard marble silence, and at a distance life awoke, and there was a rattle of lean wheels, a slow clangor of shod hoofs. And he heard the whistle wail along the river."

It is afternoon, about time to call Carl Sandburg's home. There is a moment of panic. What if he is sick? What if he might not be able to see you for several days? What if—what if—?

The Hendersonville numbers start with OX—like

something out of Rootabaga County. A man answered the phone at the Sandburg home—a man with a strong, resonant voice. I stated my business, expecting him to pass the information on to Mr. Sandburg. I discovered I was talking to Mr. Sandburg! And he remembered, and he said to come right over.

You aren't ready—you hadn't quite expected such a sudden summons. Trumpets should be blowing, you think!

You toss on a different dress and jam a hat on your head, and the lady at the motel says it surely was a quick-change. You check with her about the location of the Sandburg house, but you go right past it once, and you go up the wrong driveway—and there is that man painting a house. But finally you are going up a winding driveway with a low stone wall at the edge and you recognize the big white farmhouse from the pictures you've seen. Doubt is dispelled completely when you glimpse a man's scarf on the back of a chair, on the high upper level of the porch. Carl Sandburg is famous for the collection of scarfs which he snuggles around his throat when the air is nippy. That porch chair looks familiar too—it is the one in which he was seated during that TV interview about "The Greatest Story Ever Told." Carl Sandburg doesn't denounce all television programs—just the ones that appeal more to the blood than the brain!

As you get out of the car, a dog comes meandering from somewhere, and you ask him, "Are you Carl Sandburg's dog?" He nuzzles against you, wanting to be petted. The house is so quiet; you end up at a side

door, the dog still acting as though you are a long-lost buddy.

Margaret, the oldest Sandburg daughter, ushered me around to the front door, and I remembered:

“In your blue eyes, O reckless child,  
I saw today many little wild wishes,  
Eager as the great morning.”

Margaret's voice still has that certain lilt, a chuckle of eagerness in it under her matter-of-fact words. You tell her that this is a very vicious watchdog they have at their house.

Humor in her voice, she says that she has seen some strapping big college boys hesitating at the edge of the yard, apprehensive about that “guardian of the portals.” They must not have remembered that Carl Sandburg is a spirit-brother to Walt Whitman who said, “I think I could turn and live with the animals, they are so placid and self-contained.”

There is a walk-in lower story at the front of the old-fashioned Sandburg house, so the high porch and main entrance door are at the top of a flight of steps. Margaret opens the door, says her father is waiting in the next room, and starts to go sailing away on her farmerly business. You gulp, feeling as though you want to hang onto her affable presence. She turns back just long enough to eject the dog. This really will be a private interview. Anybody in the world would be delirious at the thought of having Carl Sandburg all to himself or herself, and here you are getting cold feet!

It isn't timidity, you know. It's humility. As you go

through that first room, you realize that this is a book-lovers' paradise. The Sandburgs do not decorate these two front rooms with chandeliers and silk draperies and "things"; they are "decorated," from floor to ceiling, with bookshelves filled with books—Mr. Sandburg's and those of other authors he appreciates or wants to consult for references.

In the next room, there is a man sitting behind a desk. He is not waiting idly; he is doing what authors do all their lives. He puts his material thoughtfully aside, as though the days and years will always be too short.

As he waved me to the seat across the desk from him, I was looking at him with awe, thinking of the almost incomprehensible flood of great thoughts that have poured out of that one brain. He was wearing the eyeshade you've seen in pictures, just like an old newspaperman. There was a scarf tossed around the collar of a plain white shirt.

He took out a cigar and a pen-knife to slice off his neat smoking ration for this time of the day. When he decided he was smoking too many cigars, he chose that method to make one cigar last all day. Realizing that the short stub of burning cigar would almost be singeing his mouth shortly, I had visions of locating some cigars about a foot long—for special days.

It was not necessary to remind him of my errand. Almost before I got my notebook out, the sparks started to fly. "All right, shoot! Let's hear those questions you want to ask me."

In pertinent places throughout the preceding chapters most of the questions and answers have been dealt

with. You will always remember the way he hefted that copy of "Remembrance Rock," saying they probably will make a motion picture of it after we both are "dead and gone." You will remember that he talked of his intense love for reading which started when he was a small boy.

Since he said he would need to talk all night if he once started to discuss labor organizing and organizations, you know you will be waiting anxiously for the publication of the second volume of his autobiography, "Ever the Winds of Chance."

At the time you are talking to him, he is finishing work on his next book of poems, "Honey and Salt," which would be published—all wrapped up in a honey-colored jacket—about the end of the year. You think it's not too surprising that a man should still be writing prose on the eve of his eighty-fifth year, but it takes a gallant young heart to write poetry too—to keep catching so much of love, so much of life, in those magical prisms of words.

Recalling certain aspects of his writing, I said, "I've noticed that you write with a dramatic flair about war and other epic conflicts, but you seem impatient with the little meannesses of life—you haven't forgotten that farmer snarling at his wife, years ago, when you were a very young boy."

Carl Sandburg shook his snowy head almost impatiently as he said, "No, no. 'Impatient' isn't the right word. Those meannesses make me sorrowful, they make me sad."

What does he think about the outlawing of prayers in schools and the resultant arguments?

"People are always arguing about religion. Remember—in 'Always the Young Strangers'?" He fixed me with a searching eye. "You've read 'Always the Young Strangers'?"

"Of course."

"And Harry Golden's book?"

"Yes, I do quite a bit of reading, whenever I have a few minutes. If we would live to be a thousand, though, we'd never be able to read all the books we want to read, would we?"

Carl Sandburg nodded. This is a point of frustration with most book-lovers, but the challenge stays keen, vital.

You had been wondering if you should ask him some personal questions about religion. To ask Carl Sandburg about his belief in God, you had come to realize, would be an impertinence. His feeling about religion ranges from the commonplace to the sublime. "Omri Winwold," he said in "Remembrance Rock," "had noticed that as a general rule the church-going people were cleaner and had a certain sense of decency not to be seen among those who stayed away."

In the Lincoln biography, Sandburg stresses the fact that people of all religions supported Lincoln, sending delegations to the White House to deliver personal messages of approval. Amid the tenderness of "the little white bird's hush song" in a miracle of a new poem in "Honey and Salt," readers in 1963 would find Carl Sandburg reproaching a "shopworn court clerk" with the words, ". . . you could be more immaculate with the name of God." Not a formal church member, Carl Sandburg's poems, his novel, and his

folksongs are likely to strike a high level of respect for the Almighty.

Because he has little use for hypocrites, his books could make better Christians of some church-goers who do not know the Bible as well as he does. The description of Lincoln could just as well apply to Carl Sandburg: "You cannot paint him in simple lines. Endowed with New Testament patience and Old Testament faith, he is too big for any book." Knowing how he feels about humanity, you can guess that Carl Sandburg sometimes looks to the distant mountains, saying, "Lord, help the Family of Man to build strong arches, before it is too late."

Carl Sandburg is a man who "saw poetry in areas usually condemned as sordid and ugly"—in the common, everyday things of life. You soon realize that he's as penetrating as his poetry and as wise as his prose. Without acting pretentious—"great men never feel great"—there is a firmness, a rightness about this man. You trust him to wear the mantle of greatness, knowing that he will not abuse the trust.

He asks if you are finding enough early material at the Library of Congress. That reminds you of the co-operation you have had from the Sandburg Birthplace too. You open your billfold and show him that you have a card identifying you as a Sustaining Member of the Carl Sandburg Birthplace, Inc. His face lights up, and he shakes his head in wonderment that any man should be so honored in his own lifetime.

You gather the books he has autographed and tell him you have taken enough of his precious time. What you wanted, most, was a picture of him in your mind—

of the atmosphere in which he writes and thinks. He rises too, and you assure him that you can find your own way out, that you know he has work to do.

Does the gallant Mr. Sandburg let it go at that? He does not. He escorts his visitor down the steps to her car. It's a little car, and he gives it a bit of chuckling attention. Then he says goodbye in the most gallant and sentimental manner imaginable—with a kiss. You can have your movie idols; they are nothing. A kiss from Carl Sandburg is mist in the mountains, and all the rainbows making arches, and all the great American Dreams ever dreamed.

You look up at him as you get into the car. His shoulders are a bit stooped, there are lines etched in his face, but he carries the weight of his years with smoothness. You think of that sentence about Abraham Lincoln: "In the stoop of his shoulders and a forward bend of his head there was a grace and familiarity making it easy for shorter people to look up into his face and talk to him."

Carl Sandburg is speaking. "There's a good place to swing around in the back. You can drive right over that hose." There is a plastic garden hose across the driveway to water the lawn.

You grin at the mundane observation. Poets watering their lawns on Olympus! But you remember how hard he has worked, this "common man." You circle around past the barn at the back and soon you are heading toward the little winding lane, waving at the Sandburg "watch-dog" lying comfortably sprawled at the top—your mind still tense with the mood of that white farmhouse with its atmosphere of so many

thoughts already captured and so many great words waiting to be written.

You are almost back at the motel when you realize that you didn't ask to see the goats! They must have been out in the pasture. Anyway, it was Carl Sandburg you came to see. If you were going to interview the goats you should have brought a photographer along. No, you won't go back and take up any more of Carl Sandburg's precious time, you tell yourself firmly. After "Honey and Salt" and "Ever the Winds of Chance" are launched, maybe he will invite you back to look at the goats. Thinking of "Honey and Salt," you feel that he will startle the critics with the undiminished vigor of his "marching cadences," the perfection of his crooning melodies, the ageless awareness that keeps ringing out with bell-tones, in the eighty-fifth year of his greatness.

Heading north toward the mountains the next day, you would be taking back even more food for thought than you had brought with you. It would be good to remember Carl Sandburg sitting at his desk, surrounded by his wealth of knowledge—those shelves and stacks of books.

You keep thinking of the things Carl Sandburg said, as though the interview were a continuing affair. You feel good about Carl Sandburg—still so very "ambulant and in his right mind." There's enough brusqueness, enough testiness, to make you thank the Lord that he hasn't turned into a "sweet old gentleman." Long ago, a young poet wrote that he would choose "to study the map of one who looks lonely, robust, querulous, as though he had gone to a country

far." By some strange trick of fate, Carl Sandburg has grown just such a face on himself.

Riverside Cemetery in Asheville is sunny and cheerful with birdsong that morning. Some colored men are digging a new grave. You leave the car and ask the way to Thomas Wolfe's grave. Following their directions, you stroll up a gentle incline and around the bend. There is a small sign reading "Thomas Wolfe" pointing toward the Wolfe burial plot. Here are names of people you have met in "Look Homeward, Angel." There are "W. O." Wolfe, the father, and Julia E., the mother, and you know that the "E" stands for "Elizabeth." They are in the middle, with Tom and his sister Mabel on either side of them. Behind the more substantial gravestones are the smaller markers. Ben's—as humble as he had needed to live—and little Grover's and the others. You see that they have been drawn so close together in death—that lusty, volatile family that two houses could scarcely contain.

You tiptoe back to stand in front of Thomas Wolfe's grave again, reading the neat words from "Look Homeward, Angel," carved there:

"The last voyage, the longest, the best."

You ask yourself what sparks the "fireborn," thinking of Carl Sandburg and Thomas Wolfe. Both of them grew up reading the same kind of books. Both were newspaper boys. Each had at least one quite frugal parent. There was cruelty in Thomas Wolfe's biting wit, and this was part of his genius. Carl Sandburg touches the memories of his youth with a gentle, compassionate hand.

Thomas Wolfe, with a sort of magnificent inconsis-

tency, was more of a thundering radical than Carl Sandburg during the years of his ravenous writing fury. With Wolfe, it was more highly personal; he was the apex, the center of the whirlpool. Sandburg chose to be part of the common current, immersing himself in the mainstream of life, feeling the storm and the calm as one of many in the great human family.

Neither Carl Sandburg nor Thomas Wolfe would number themselves among the people "who can be bought." Both of these flamboyant giants of their age, so different, have been fired with the word-fury and word-sweetness of a Walt Whitman.

You mull it all over in your mind on the way back to the car. You know you are "groping and searching for something," but you aren't quite certain what it is. Thanking the helpful cemetery workmen who ask you if you found Thomas Wolfe's grave all right, you head up into the mountains, still wondering about these people who "leave footprints on the sands of time." Who will be the "fireborn"? Who will "leave footprints on the sands of time," and why? There usually is some outstanding character clue—a way of looking at life that most people miss—a certain quality to which you can point and say, "The story of this man's life is in these few words."

You almost laugh at yourself, remembering those sentences from "The People, Yes":

" 'I shall arrange the facts and leave the interpretation to the reader,' said the hopeful biographer to the somber historian.

" 'The moment you begin to arrange you interpret,' emitted the somber historian."

You think of the sensitivity of this man Sandburg. It goes deep, high and wide. Then you realize what has been bothering you. It had only been a small part of the interview yesterday, seeming no more important than anything else at the moment.

It comes back so clearly now that you don't need to consult your notes. You had said, "I've noticed that you write with a dramatic flair about war . . . but you seem impatient with the little meannesses of life. . . ."

You recall the way he lifted his head so quickly, the lines of his face deepening. "No, no. 'Impatient' isn't the right word. Those meannesses make me sorrowful, they make me sad."

And you remember those words from one of his folksongs:

"I sometimes am worried, but I never am vex't."

This is the glorious, mystic light of Carl Sandburg's genius in the eighty-fifth year of his greatness. Mystic? Abraham Lincoln's philosophy was very much the same.

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